# A HISTORY OF
# OBERLIN COLLEGE

*FROM ITS FOUNDATION*
*THROUGH THE CIVIL WAR*

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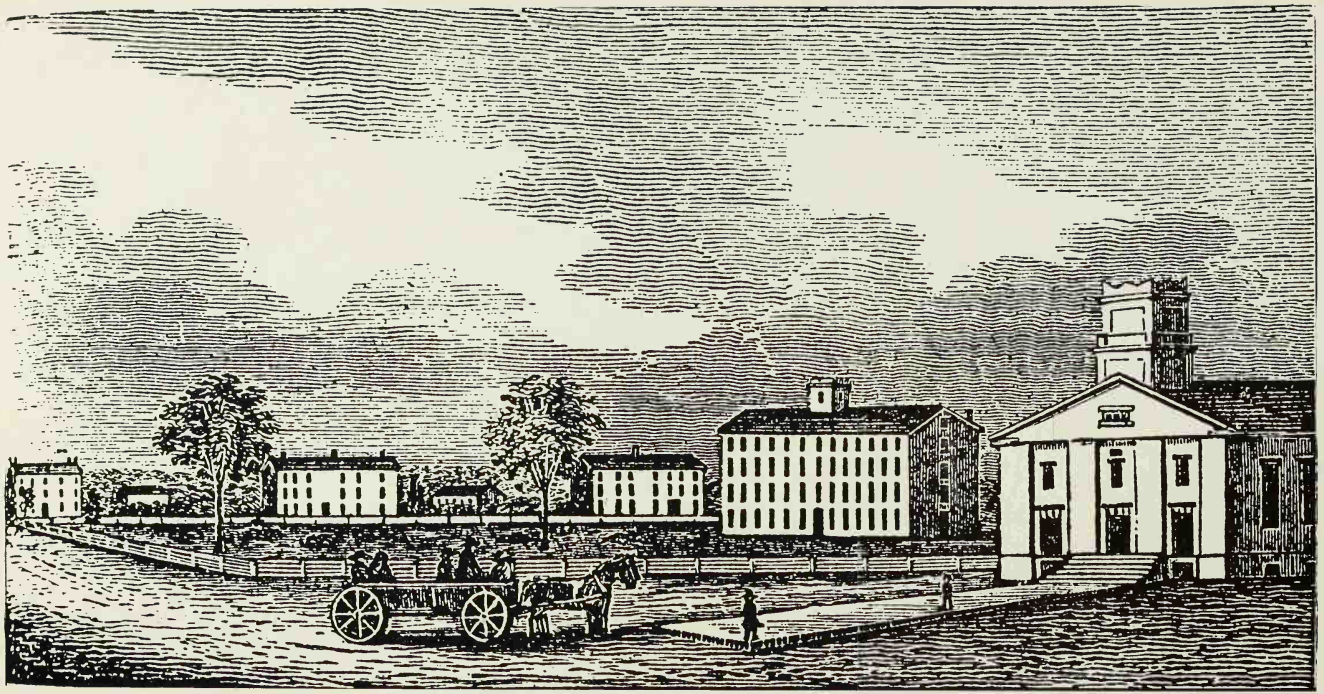

THE MEETING HOUSE, TAPPAN SQUARE AND OBERLIN INSTITUTE BUILDINGS—1846

From a drawing made by Henry Howe in 1846, published in his *Historical Collections of Ohio* (Cincinnati—1848), page 315 and in later editions. The text states, "The engraving shows, on the right, the Presbyterian church, a substantial brick building, neatly finished externally and internally, and capable of holding a congregation of 3000 persons [?]; beyond it, on a green of about 12 acres, stands Tappan Hall; facing the green, commencing on the left, are seen Oberlin Hall, Ladies' Hall and Colonial Hall, all of which buildings belong to the Institute." The chemistry laboratory may be seen between Ladies' Hall and Colonial Hall. The small building between Oberlin Hall and Ladies' Hall is probably the "shop."

# A HISTORY OF
# OBERLIN COLLEGE

*From Its Foundation*
*Through the Civil War*

BY

ROBERT SAMUEL FLETCHER

Volume I

OBERLIN COLLEGE
OBERLIN, OHIO
1943

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*To*
*Mary Elizabeth*

# *PREFACE*

OBERLIN COLLEGE long ago proved its right to a place in the history of the American people. Even the briefest textbook of American history contains some reference to the rôle which it played in the middle nineteenth century.

I am an alumnus of Oberlin College and have been a member, for fifteen years, of its faculty, but I have approached the very pleasant task of writing this history primarily as a teacher and student of American social, intellectual, and political history. The selection of the subject was chiefly the result of the availability of the historical material. I believe that a degree of objectivity has been possible to me because of the great gulf that lies inevitably between the Oberlin of a hundred years ago and the Oberlin of today.

In the larger sense Oberlin College has written its own history. The founders, benefactors, teachers, administrators and students who have made up Oberlin College enacted its history; and they and their successors and descendants have preserved the records and made them available for this compilation. My task has been that of locating, assembling, sorting, and, particularly, interpreting this material in relation to other data secured from outside sources and in the light of the studies of other historians in associated fields.

This history is constructed very largely out of contemporary sources: diaries, letters, manuscript minutes, newspapers, etc., but the interpretation is built on the foundation furnished by the work of such historians as Carl Russell Fish, Gilbert H. Barnes, William Warren Sweet, Merle Curti, Ralph H. Shryock, Thomas Woody and Ellis Merton Coulter, as well as the other writers on Oberlin College history: James H. Fairchild, Delavan L. Leonard, William H. Chapin, Frances J. Hosford, and Clayton Sumner Ellsworth.

I have been engaged in the preparation of this book for over a dozen years, and have had the advice and assistance of hundreds of persons. It is manifestly undesirable and impossible to tell

here the whole story of the enterprise, or to give credit to all to whom credit is due.

To the Board of Trustees of Oberlin College I owe first acknowledgment for financial assistance. Scores of members of the teaching, administrative, and secretarial staff of the College have helped me, but to Secretary George M. Jones and Librarian Julian S. Fowler I owe a deep and special debt for their early encouragement and very material aid. Miss Gertrude Ransom of the Secretary's office has shared with me, from the beginning, her intimate knowledge of the College records. Dr. W. F. Bohn, Assistant to the President, has taken a great interest in the project.

Hundreds of alumni and descendants of alumni and former teachers responded to my call for original letters and diaries. The late Sylvanus Converse Huntington, Jr., A.B., 1876, of Pulaski and Oswego, New York, searched the records in various New York counties for the names of descendants of former officials and students. It was through this work that I located Miss May Bragdon of Rochester, who lent me her invaluable collection of the letters of John Jay Shipherd. The Misses Alice and Elizabeth Little of Oberlin not only freely opened to me the extensive collection of the papers of Henry Cowles and his family which is in their possession, but gave me many clues to other material. Mr. James Thome Fairchild of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, son of President James Harris Fairchild, has allowed me to read his father's early letters, and has furnished to me many revealing glimpses of the older Oberlin through the lens of his remarkably fresh and accurate memory.

All candid research workers must recognize the essential importance of the assistance rendered by librarians. I have been granted every facility and much intelligent advice by the staffs of the Rochester Public Library and the libraries of Union Theological Seminary of New York, Syracuse University, and the Presbyterian Theological Seminary of Chicago. For many years now the staff of the Oberlin College Library has put up with my ubiquitous presence and innumerable requests. Miss Mary Venn, Oberlin Reference Librarian, has helped me in many ways through every stage of the task.

I owe a great debt, too, to various loyal research and stenographic assistants: Mrs. Geraldine Hopkins Hubbard, Walter P. Rogers, Lloyd V. Hennings, LeRoy Graf, the late Mrs. Lucia

Robinson, Mrs. Carolyn Herron Britton, and Mrs. Lorraine Brockhaus. Mr. Arthur E. Princehorn has taken great pains with the photographic work.

At one stage in its preparation the manuscript of this history was submitted to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of Harvard University as a doctoral dissertation. The present version is the result, however, of several added years of research.

President Ernest H. Wilkins, Dean Carl Wittke and Secretary Donald M. Love have given much time and attention to the many problems of publication. Dean Wittke has read the entire manuscript. My colleague, Professor Frederick B. Artz, Professor W. T. Upton of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Professor Irving S. Kull of Rutgers University, and my friend and former student, Dr. Walter P. Rogers of the State Teachers College, Potsdam, New York, have read certain portions. My wife, in the course of several readings, has called my attention to many slips and infelicities. Despite the efforts of all of these, I have, undoubtedly, preserved many errors. For all such errors I accept the responsibility, pleading the best of intentions.

ROBERT SAMUEL FLETCHER

*Oberlin*
*October 27, 1942*

# *SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS*

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*The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly* to reprint parts of my articles entitled "Bread and Doctrine at Oberlin" and "Oberlin and Co-education."

*The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* to reprint part of my article entitled "The Government of the Oberlin Colony."

The Ohio Presbyterian Historical Society to reprint parts of my article entitled "The Pastoral Theology of Charles G. Finney" from the *Proceedings*.

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# *TABLE OF CONTENTS*


BOOK ONE: THE SHADOW OF A MAN . . . 1

I. Yankee Invasion . . . . . 3

II. Apparition on the Mohawk . . . . 6

III. The Rochester Revival . . . . 17

IV. Finney on Broadway . . . . . 25

V. The Manual Labor Schools . . . 34

VI. Cincinnati . . . . . 44

VII. John Jay Shipherd . . . . . 58

VIII. Elyria . . . . . 70

IX. A Grand Scheme . . . . . 85

X. Oberlin Colony . . . . . 102

XI. Oberlin Institute . . . . . 117

XII. Immediate Emancipation . . . . 142

XIII. The Test of Academic Freedom . . . 150

XIV. The Guarantee of Academic Freedom . 167

XV. Boom Times at Oberlin . . . . 179

XVI. New Leaders for Old . . . . . 191

BOOK TWO: OBERLINISM . . . . . 205

XVII. God's College . . . . . 207

XVIII. Hotbed of Abolitionism . . . . 236

XIX. Toward an Anti-Slavery Church . . 254

XX. The Campaign Against War . . . 271

XXI. Female Reformers . . . . . 290

XXII. "Physiological Reform" . . . . 316

XXIII. The Whole Man . . . . . 341

XXIV. Joint Education of the Sexes . . . 373

XXV. Free Soil and the Underground . . . 386

XXVI. Higher Law . . . . . 401

XXVII. The Propaganda . . . . . 417

BOOK THREE: THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE 427
XXVIII. The Devil and the World . . . . 429
XXIX. Oberlinizing England . . . . . 451
XXX. Mahan . . . . . 472
XXXI. Hard Times and the Endowment . . . 489

# *LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS*


The Meeting House, Tappan Square and Oberlin Institute Buildings—1846 . . . . *Frontispiece*

OPPOSITE PAGE

Charles Grandison Finney, about 1835 . . . . 32
Interior of the Broadway Tabernacle . . . . 33
Lewis Tappan . . . . . 42
Shipherd's *Sabbath School Guide* . . . . . 64
Shipherd's Sunday School Magazine. . . . . 65
The Western Reserve in 1837 . . . . . 72
Elyria, 1846 . . . . . 82
Samuel Read Hall, First President-Elect of Oberlin . . 100
Signatures of the Oberlin Colonists . . . . . 106
1833 Records of the Oberlin Colony and Institute . . 107
The Oberlin Setting . . . . . 114
First Public Announcement of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute . . . . . 122
Eliza Branch, Who Taught the Infant School in 1833-34 . . . . . 123
Memorandum of Tools Lent by the Oberlin Institute . 126
Advertisement of the Oberlin Cooking Stove . . . 138
Tax Return of the Oberlin Institute for the Fiscal Year 1833-34 . . . . . 139
Lane Seminary Buildings . . . . . 152
The Student Questionnaire "As to the Practicability of Admitting Persons of Color"—1834 . . . . 170
Cincinnati or "Slab" Hall . . . . . 186
President Mahan's House . . . . . 187
Stewart's Cooking Stoves . . . . . 196
Shipherd's Grave at Olivet . . . . . 202
Charles Grandison Finney, 1850 . . . . . 208

"Convention of the Anti-Slavery Society, June 1840"—World's Anti-Slavery Convention . . . 240
Program of August First Celebration, 1846 . . . 250
Call for a Meeting of the Oberlin Peace Society . . 274
Amos Dresser . . . . . 280
Antoinette Brown . . . . . 292
Lucy Stone . . . . . 292
"Young Ladies' Course"—A Page from the 1849-50 *Catalogue* . . . . . 293
Stock Certificate in the Oberlin Gymnasium—1861 . . 352
Norton Strange Townshend . . . . . 356
Advertisement of P. R. Spencer's Writing Academy . . 362
Autograph of Platt Rogers Spencer . . . . . 363
Oberlin "Female" Students of the Late Fifties . . . 382
James Monroe in the Forties . . . . . 390
James Monroe in the Fifties . . . . . 390
A Ticket on the Underground Railroad . . . . 396
"The Confidence Game"—The Underground Railroad near Oberlin . . . . . 397
Henry Everard Peck . . . . . 406
Oberlin Stationery at the Time of the Rescue Case . . 407
The Rescuers at the Jail . . . . . 410
Broadside Calling a Mass Meeting to Celebrate the Release of the Rescuers . . . . . 411
Lewis Sheridan Leary . . . . . 414
The Cover of Delazon Smith's *History of Oberlin* or *Oberlin Unmasked* . . . . . 440
John Keep . . . . . 458
Memoranda of the Expenses of the Keep-Dawes Mission . 459
Subscription Book of the Oberlin Mission to England . 468
Emily Pillsbury Burke . . . . . 480
Petition for the Retention of Mahan . . . . 481
Asa Mahan . . . . . 486
A Twenty-Five-Dollar Scholarship . . . . . 498

## Some Abbreviations Used in the Footnotes

T.M. ..... MS minutes of the Board of Trustees of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute and Oberlin College.

P.C.M. ..... MS minutes of the Prudential Committee.

F.M. ..... MS minutes of the Oberlin faculty.

L.B.M. ..... MS minutes of the Ladies' Board.

A.H.M.S. MSS ..... Papers of the American Home Missionary Society.

Sec. Off. ..... Office of the Secretary of Oberlin College.

Treas. Off. ..... Office of the Treasurer of Oberlin College.

*D.A.B.* ..... *The Dictionary of American Biography.*

*D.N.B.* ..... *The Dictionary of National Biography.*

See the "Partial List of Sources," page 925 *et seq.*

*Book One*

# The Shadow of a Man

". . . I have a retainer from the Lord Jesus Christ to plead His cause, . . . ."

CHARLES GRANDISON FINNEY,
*Memoirs,* 24.

# CHAPTER I

## *YANKEE INVASION*

THIS is a story about Yankees. It is not a story of Boston, but of men and women from Connecticut, western Massachusetts, and Vermont who went to live in New York and Ohio. The early annals of Oberlin College are a part of the history of the mighty outpouring of New Englanders over the nation and the world which took place in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries—an outpouring comparable to that of the Northmen in the tenth and eleventh centuries or, more exactly, to that of the Scots in later times.

In those days all Americans saw a vision in the West: fertile acres to be had almost for the asking, mighty rivers waiting to carry a fabulous commerce, sites for teeming cities. Scarce a man but felt the urge to "go west and grow up with the country." "The Valley of the Mississippi is a portion of our country which is arresting the attention not only of our own inhabitants, but also those of foreign lands," wrote the editor of an *Emigrants' Guide* published in 1832.[1] "Such are its admirable facilities for trade, . . . —such the variety and fertility of its soil, . . . —the genial nature of its climate,—the rapidity with which its population is increasing,—and the influence which it is undoubtedly about to wield . . . as to render the West an object of the deepest interest to every American patriot. Nor can the Christian be inattentive to the inceptive character and forming manners of a part of our country whose influence will soon be felt to be favourable, or disastrous, to an extent corresponding with its mighty energies, to the cause of religion."

Many Christian workers, in Connecticut in particular, had already come to appreciate the great significance of the West and had an even grander dream. They would make through it a

[1] *View of the Valley of the Mississippi: or the Emigrants' and Travellers' Guide to the West* (Philadelphia—1832), iii.

new nation and a new world. As a new society was built up in western America let it be thoroughly Christianized and purified of evil in order that from it might be spread to all the rest of the Earth the millennial order foretold in Scripture. The American Home Missionary Society founded in 1826 by Absalom Peters, the American Education Society led by Elias Cornelius, whose purpose was to educate young men for the evangelization of the West, and the American Sunday School Union were all Protestant Christian agencies (dominated by Congregationalists and Presbyterians) devoted to this task. Pious theological students looked to the New West as the greatest field of effort then open and many of them went out to preach and to found western schools where other workers should be trained. Out of the activities of these and other home missionaries grew most of the early colleges of the West.

The hill-country Yankee farmers marched into central and western New York and on to Connecticut's Western Reserve in Ohio and into other areas south and west of the Great Lakes, regions which had escaped the first settlers from the South and the Middle States who followed the Wilderness Trail, the Ohio River, and the Cumberland Road. Yankee merchants, craftsmen, teachers and ministers went with the farmers—and beyond. Peddlers and traders from Connecticut invaded all parts of the West and the South. New England furnished more than her share of the nation's teachers, and ministers trained at Yale spread Yankee culture through congregations and colleges everywhere. Calvinist Princeton was not without influence in the middle regions and the South, but cold, Unitarian Harvard made little appeal to the inhabitants of "the provinces." Yale was puritanical and moralistic, more conservative theologically than Harvard but infinitely more dynamic, and sponsoring an aggressive religious individualism against Princeton's dour authoritarian dogmatism. Yale was the great Mother of Colleges in the nineteenth century because her sons were impressed with a great sense of individual spiritual and moral responsibility and motivated by a deep personal devotion to the cause of cultural, ethical, Christian missions. Dartmouth, Williams, Middlebury, and Hamilton in New York were offsprings and satellites, soon to be joined by others farther west.

The story of Oberlin begins in the rich Mohawk Valley, which by the third decade of the nineteenth century had been pretty thoroughly annexed to Yankeedom.[2]

[2]Background material is to be found in: L. K. Mathews Rosenberry, *The Expansion of New England* (Boston—1909); R. L. Power, "A Crusade to Extend Yankee Culture, 1820–1865," *New England Quarterly*, XIII, 638–653 (Dec., 1940); C. B. Goodykoontz, *Home Missions on the American Frontier* (Caldwell, Idaho—1939); D. G. Tewksbury, *The Founding of American Colleges and Universities before the Civil War* (New York—1932); Frank H. Foster, *A Genetic History of New England Theology* (Chicago—1907); William Warren Sweet, *Religion on the American Frontier:* vol. II, *The Presbyterians* (New York—1936), and vol. III, *The Congregationalists* (Chicago—c. 1939), and Peter G. Mode, *The Frontier Spirit in American Christianity* (New York—1923), ch. IV. Most valuable is Charles Roy Keller's *The Second Great Awakening in Connecticut* (New Haven—1942), just published as this history goes to press.

## CHAPTER II

# *APPARITION ON THE MOHAWK*

WEST from Washington County on the borders of Vermont through the Troy, Albany and Cohoes area and more especially in the upper valley of the Mohawk around Utica, Whitesboro and Rome in Oneida County, the New Englanders overlaid the earlier strata of Dutch and Germans. They had come from Vermont and Berkshire County, Massachusetts, but mostly from the Land of Steady Habits. They brought with them traditions of industry and economy and an earnest and practical piety. Their ministers and schoolmasters were steeped in the optimistic theology of Yale, aggressive missionaries of a prospective moral and religious renaissance. They reaped much of the profit that came from improvements in transportation and industrial development in the first and second generations of the nineteenth century. Certainly they were to a large extent responsible for the canals and turnpikes and the factories which brought prosperity to the region. Textile factories began operation at various points where power was available in the period of the Embargo and the War of 1812, or soon after, at Oriskany, Utica, Whitesboro, Ballston Spa, Albany, Troy, and New Lebanon.[1] The digging of the Erie Canal was started in 1817, and the boom produced along the route by the funds expended for construction furnished something of a foretaste of the prosperity which resulted from its operation.

Most of the settlers were Congregationalists, but many from Connecticut were accustomed to the semi-Presbyterian polity established there in Colonial times. In agreements reached in 1801, "The Plan of Union," and 1808, "The Accommodation Plan," they sank their differences with regard to church government

[1]D. R. Fox, *Yankees and Yorkers* (N. Y.—1940), ch. VII *et passim,* and H. J. Carman, "Beginnings of the Industrial Revolution," A. C. Flick, *History of the State of New York,* V (N. Y.—1934), 346–357.

in favor of coöperative action in the new country. This would bring together not only all the New Englanders of the Finger Lakes, St. Lawrence and Mohawk areas but also the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians who had pushed up the Susquehanna from Pennsylvania. As the scheme worked out the individual Yankee churches might organize on the Congregational or Presbyterian plan, but almost all became associated with the presbyteries, synods and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. Perhaps even Congregationalists believed that an authoritative ecclesiastical system was preferable where society was in the formative stage and there might be many irregular and heretical preachers or other religious leaders who would require disciplining.[2] But the tradition of Congregational church independence, though dormant, was not entirely forgotten, and proved useful as a refuge for minority elements at a later day.

The Year of Our Lord 1825 was a memorable one in the Mohawk Valley. Governor Clinton and his party carried their keg of Erie water along the ditch to Albany—the Great Western Canal was open! General Lafayette, travelling in the opposite direction, was fêted, toasted and orated to at all the up-and-coming towns while cannon roared and militia and independent companies deployed in resplendent uniforms. But to many the greatest sensation was the appearance on the scene of a young ex-attorney who called the merchant from his ledger, the housewife from the hearth, the farmer from his plow, the politician from the hustings, the lawyer from the courtroom, and the student from his classes to consider the things that are eternal and shall not pass away.

Charles G. Finney was apparently destined for greatness by every personal quality and physical attribute. Handsome in a virile way, he was six feet and two inches tall, with a bold forehead, remarkable, hypnotic, frightening eyes, and an expressive and sympathetic mouth which partially compensated for the fierceness of his glance and the harshness of his keen and assertive nose and chin. Finney was magnetic, dynamic, arresting; and when he threw his tremendous energy, his keen intellect, his unmatched courage into a campaign to stir up a live and aggressive Christianity among church members and bring into the fold the

[2]R. H. Nichols, "The Plan of Union in New York," *Church History*, V, 29–52 (Mar., 1936).

unchurched sinners, the receptive New York Yankees were stirred to a high pitch of religious fervor. There were some who opposed him, though many turned to him as to a new Paul; none, however, could ignore him.

Charles Grandison Finney was born in Warren, Connecticut, on August 29, 1792, the seventh son of Sylvester Finney, a revolutionary soldier and member of an early Massachusetts family. When he was about two years old his parents moved to Oneida County in central New York. Here Finney grew up, receiving the usual common-school education available in the country schools of the time.[3] In 1808 the family moved again—this time to Henderson, a town near Sackett's Harbor in Jefferson County, where he undertook to teach a rural school—with outstanding success, legend says. After four years of teaching, he returned to Warren in Connecticut to continue his studies preparatory to entering Yale College. His course of study at Warren included several books of Virgil, Cicero's orations, the "Greek testament so far as to pass the usual examination before Presbytery & so much Hebrew as to be able to satisfy myself of the meaning of a text taken."[4] Discouraged from going on to Yale by his instructor, he went to New Jersey to teach for two years, after which he returned to central New York where, at the town of Adams, in 1818, he entered the office of Judge Benjamin Wright to study law. Under the guidance of Wright he read enough Blackstone to gain admission to the bar and entered upon a promising legal career.

Up to this time he had never taken any particular interest in religion, because, he declared in later years, of the dearth of churches and educated pastors in the region where he was brought up. At Warren he had listened to the sermons of a trained minister, however, without being particularly stimulated thereby. At Adams he entered the congregation of the Presbyterian minister, George W. Gale, and became the director of the church choir. Nevertheless, he continued in his critical,

[3]On Finney's early life see G. F. Wright, *Charles Grandison Finney* (N. Y.—1893); *Memoirs of Rev. Charles G. Finney* (N. Y.—1876); original MS of *Ibid.* in Oberlin College Library; W. C. Cochran, *Charles Grandison Finney* (Philadelphia—1908), and the sketch in the *Dictionary of American Biography.* Wright's genealogical data is disputed in F. C. Clark, *The Bristol Branch of the Finney Family* published by the New England Historical and Genealogical Society, Boston (n.d.).

[4]MS Memoirs, 9 reverse.

indeed scornful, attitude toward Christianity. "On one occasion," he later wrote in his *Memoirs,* "while I was in one of the prayer-meetings, I was asked if I did not desire that they should pray for me. I told them, no; Because I did not see that God answered their prayers." He must, indeed, have been a trial to good Mr. Gale.

In these early years he seems to have been an all-round good-fellow: he sang well; he danced with grace and enthusiasm; he was passionately devoted to his 'cello; he excelled in all sorts of sports; he was a prime favorite with the younger group generally. The sources are conflicting with regard to his morals, but they were certainly not worse than those of the average, unconverted, spritely youths of the time and region. With his charming personality, oratorical powers and legal training, he seemed assured of a brilliant political career.[5]

But in 1821 he became interested in the study of Mosaic law and bought a Bible to be used as a work of reference in this connection. In the autumn of that year his study of the Bible, working upon what Gale had taught him, his Puritan heritage, and his own spiritual sensitiveness heightened by a knowledge of the prayers of Lydia Andrews, his future wife, finally brought about his conversion. For three days he wrestled with the angel, agonized by the deepest conviction of sin and tortured by fears for his soul's welfare. Finally, while sitting by the fire in his office, he "received a mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost." ". . . The Holy Spirit descended upon me in a manner that seemed to go through me, body and soul," he later wrote. "I could feel the impression, like a wave of electricity, going through and through me. Indeed it seemed to come in waves and waves of liquid love; for I could not express it in any other way. It seemed like the very breath of God. I can recollect distinctly that it seemed to fan me, like immense wings; and it seemed to me, as these waves passed over me, that they literally moved my hair like a passing breeze."[6] It was great news for the little town of Adams: Finney, the gay, brilliant, care-free young attorney had abandoned his profession, his promising political future, his

[5]On his chances in the political field see Cochran's interesting speculations in *Op. Cit.,* 37–44.

[6]MS Memoirs, 38. On Lydia Andrews' prayers see the obituary of Mrs. Lydia A. Finney in the *Oberlin Evangelist,* Jan. 5, 1848.

whole former life, for the service of God. When a client came to his office to consult him, he dismissed him abruptly: "Deacon B——, I have a retainer from the Lord Jesus Christ to plead his cause, and cannot plead yours." The people of the community gathered at the church at a special evening service to see if it was really true. Finney, previously silent and cynical, prayed and preached, and a revival was begun in which many others were converted.

Finney never doubted that he was divinely called to preach the Gospel and, from the day of his conversion, seems never to have considered any other career. He pursued his theological studies under the direction of the Reverend Mr. Gale and was licensed by the presbytery in the spring of 1824 and ordained in the following July. On March 17, 1824, he was commissioned by the Female Missionary Society of the Western District of New York to preach in the schoolhouses in the backwoods of Jefferson County north of Watertown.[7] There he found immorality, deism and atheism. He met the hostility of the community with the arrogant denunciations of a Jeremiah. At one schoolhouse meeting in a notoriously iniquitous and irreligious village he preached on the text: "Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city." Appearing before another audience in a similar settlement, he flayed them with a sermon from the text: "Ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of Hell?" It is a marvel that he escaped being lynched then and there. Eyes blazing, drawn up to his full height, he shook his finger under their very noses and told them, in the voice of a judge sentencing a convicted murderer, that, assuredly, each and every one of them would some day scorch in the flames of Hell. Then, having aroused his hearers, he would suddenly change his tone from condemnation to pleading and thus bring them to a conviction of their sins, so that sometimes whole congregations fell on their knees or prostrate on the floor, where they remained all night and had to be carried away in the morning in time to make room for the school children! Many of the most hardened sinners were converted and a religious and moral

[7]The commission is in the Finney MSS in the Oberlin College Library. There is a contemporary account of his earliest revival activities written by Finney in the *Religious Intelligencer* (New Haven), July 17, 1824. The *Western Recorder* (Utica) contains much data on Finney's activities in the valley.

revolution resulted, the good effects of which were evident years later.[8]

Soon echoes of Finney's mighty blows began to come out of the forest and he was invited into the pulpits of towns in the canal belt, especially in Oneida County. In September, 1825, Finney began his campaign in that region at the town of Western, a few miles north of Rome where Mr. Gale was living in retirement at that time. There his success was repeated. "Christians were humbled for their past unfaithfulness," wrote Gale. "Sinners began to enquire what they must do. Convictions and conversions multiplied and spread through the town. In some instances whole households were converted."[9] One of these households was that of George Brayton, the leading merchant of the place. A son, Milton, became an outstanding worker for religious and benevolent causes in Utica.[10] One hundred and forty persons were said to have been converted altogether. From Western, Finney was invited to the important canal town of Rome by the Rev. Moses Gillett, pastor of the Presbyterian Church there.—Rome fell. At the end of the first inquiry meeting held in that place the participants "gave vent to their feelings in sobs and groans." Meetings were held daily for five weeks. "All classes of people were affected," reported Mr. Gillett. "Four lawyers, four physicians, all the merchants who were not professors before, and men of the first respectability in the place, are hopeful converts."[11]

At Utica, too, Finney's "plain and pungent and faithful preaching was attended with evident and wonderful success." According to the minister of the First Presbyterian Church, S. C. Aikin, the resulting revival "made 'new creatures' of gamblers and drunkards, and swearers and Sabbath-breakers, and brought the self-righteous pharisee, the deluded skeptic, deist, and universalist, to abandon their dreams of happiness and heaven, without a holy heart, and to fly for cleansing to the blood of the Lamb." Finney also led successful awakenings in Auburn to

[8]G. F. Wright, *Op. Cit.*, 26–45, and *Memoirs, passim.*

[9]*A Narrative of the Revival of Religion in the County of Oneida . . . in the year 1826* (Utica—1826), 7.

[10]*Memoirs,* 149–150. Some of Milton Brayton's activities are mentioned in the *Western Recorder,* Sept. 21, 1820; Oct. 25, 1831, and Dec. 4, 1832.

[11]*Narrative of the Revival,* 10–11. Contemporary accounts of the revivals at Western and Rome are in the *Western Recorder,* Dec. 13, 1825, and Jan. 9, 1826.

the west and Troy to the east. At the meeting of the Oneida Presbytery in Utica in February, 1826, Finney was present on invitation and heard a report on revivals expressing "joy and gratitude" that such numbers of "men of sound sense and strong minds" had been "brought as little children to the feet of Jesus."[12]

Certainly one of the most notable characteristics of Finney's revivals was that so many "men of sound sense and strong minds" —professed Christians or "unbelievers" previously—found in these revivals an inspiration to Christian living and labor. Among these were several lawyers: Judge Jonas Platt of Utica and his son Zephaniah, the Honorable Zebulon Rudd Shipherd of Troy and Granville (a former Congressman), and Theodore Spencer of Auburn. Judge Platt was one of the most prominent men of the region; he had been a Federalist member of Congress, a general in the militia and justice of the New York Supreme Court. Spencer gave up the law for the ministry after his conversion.[13] The Rev. John Monteith, co-founder of the University of Michigan, and professor in Hamilton College at Clinton near Utica after 1821, became an enthusiastic Finney man.[14] Captain Charles Stuart, a retired British army officer was a Utica school teacher;—Horatio Seymour was one of his pupils. He had turned to the ministry before Finney's arrival, studied privately with Monteith for a few months and was licensed to preach in May, 1825. He became a devoted member of Finney's revival band, sometimes called the "Holy Band."[15] In Utica, Finney converted

[12]*Narrative of the Revival,* 23–24; *Western Recorder,* Feb. 14, 1826, and Oneida Presbytery, MS Minutes, V, 33 (Feb. 7, 1826) *et passim.* A year later the author of the official "Narrative of the State of Religion" declared: "The whole year has been one day of his glory."—MS Minutes, V, 75 (Mar. 9, 1827). Finney was a regular member of the Oneida Presbytery from Sept. 8, 1826, to June 28, 1832, when he was dismissed to the Third Presbytery of New York City—MS Minutes, V, 55 and 351.

[13]*Memoirs,* 326–327 and 230–231. On Spencer see P. H. Fowler, *Historical Sketch of Presbyterianism . . . of Central New York* (Utica—1877), 651–655. On Platt see *Biographical Directory of the American Congress,* 1774–1927 (Washington—1928).

[14]Henry Davis, *A Narrative of the Embarrassments and Decline of Hamilton College* [Clinton—1833], 89 note, and E. H. Gillett, *History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States* (Philadelphia—1864), II, 438–9.

[15]Fowler, *Op. Cit.,* 661–663, and sketch in the *Dictionary of American Biography.* There is reference to Stuart's studying with Monteith and his licensure in the Oneida Presbytery, MS Minutes, IV, 357 (Feb. 22, 1825), and V, 3 (May 11, 1825). Stewart Mitchell in his *Horatio Seymour of New York* (Cambridge, Mass. —1938), 28, mentions Seymour's studying with Stuart.

Stuart's protégé, Theodore Weld, later the brilliant pleader of causes, perhaps the "strongest mind" of all.[16] Strong-minded too was Asa Mahan, who graduated from Hamilton in 1824 and was licensed by the Oneida Presbytery in May, 1827—another complete Finney man.[17] The Rev. John Frost of the church at Whitesboro was one of the evangelist's earliest supporters. You may still read the epitaph on his tombstone: "In his life and death no less than in his public ministrations he illustrated the force and beauty of the precepts of the Bible."[18] At Auburn were the Revs. Dirck C. Lansing and Josiah Hopkins. Mr. Lansing labored powerfully as one of Finney's lieutenants in the revival cause at Auburn and later in Utica and New York City.[19] Josiah Hopkins who succeeded Lansing as pastor at Auburn had taught divinity to John Jay Shipherd, the later founder of Oberlin College. S. C. Aikin, Noah Coe, Moses Gillett, N. S. S. Beman, Herman Norton, Luther Myrick and, of course, George W. Gale were other ministers of the Oneida Presbytery who worked enthusiastically in the Finney revivals.

In 1817 Charles Hastings opened a bookstore at Utica and soon after established a circulating library. In the early twenties he and his brother, Thomas Hastings, like Finney, natives of Litchfield County, Connecticut, founded the *Western Recorder*.[20] This periodical was the chief organ of the Presbyterian-Congregational churches of central New York. Under the editorship of Thomas Hastings it effectively publicized and editorially defended the Finney revivals. Among the agents of the *Recorder* listed in the number dated February 24, 1829, were Z. R. Shipherd of Granville, George Brayton of Western, John Frost of Whitesboro, and Joab Seeley of Ogdensburgh, the latter a convert of Finney's earliest revival in the north of the state.

[16]*Memoirs*, 184–8. This is a classic description of a conversion. On Weld see also the well-known Gilbert H. Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse* (N. Y.—c. 1933), *passim*, and the same author's sketch in the *Dictionary of American Biography*. Theodore's brother, Charles, was a licentiate of the Oneida Presbytery. —*American Quarterly Register*, III, 207 (Feb., 1831).

[17]MS Minutes of the Oneida Presbytery, IV, 316 (July 1, 1824) and V, 80 (May 30, 1827), and also see below pages 20, 46–9 this text, etc.

[18]Copied from the stone by the author in 1939.

[19]Perhaps Lansing was a hypochondriac. In a testimonial in the *Western Recorder* (Oct. 19, 1830) he declared that *Dr. Roberts' Welch Medicamentum* had cured him of "turns of distress." He was not a Yankee, but a member of an old Dutch family.

[20]D. E. Wager, *A Descriptive Work on Oneida County, New York* ([Boston]—1896), 302; Fowler, *Op. Cit.*, 696–705, and files of the *Western Recorder*.

Thomas Hastings was also a music teacher and a collector and composer of sacred music. In lecture tours and through the columns of the *Recorder* he labored for the establishment of musical societies "so organized as to call forth the *piety*, as well as the musical talent of the country." The climax of his work in upstate New York came with the founding of the New York State Central Musical Society in Utica in August, 1831. Hastings keynoted the organization meeting in an address in which he emphasized the need that music teachers should be "pious and competent" and pointed out that "revivals of religion had been attendants on singing school." The Rev. D. C. Lansing became president of the society; Samuel C. Aikin was first vice-president; Milton Brayton was treasurer and Hastings, naturally, was corresponding secretary.[21] In 1829 Hastings, in an editorial, commented favorably on the work of Lowell Mason in Boston. But in the following year he wrote a scathing review of a hymn book prepared by the Rev. Joshua Leavitt of New York City, secretary of the Seamen's Friend Society: "We are truly sorry that any minister of the gospel . . . should have associated his name with such a wretched publication as this."[22] The review and the influence of Finney resulted in his later removal to New York City where he supervised the music at several leading churches.

As Finney aroused the enthusiasm and admiration of many, he likewise stirred many to bitter opposition. While a convert like Theodore Weld believed him the greatest of all preachers, others saw in him the chief enemy of true religion. "Brother Platt," wrote Weld to a fellow convert in 1829, "I am persuaded neither you nor I have ever duly estimated the preaching of that modern Paul . . . for my own part, when I make a plain estimate of Mr. F.[inney] as a preacher in comparison with *any other*—within my knowledge—he rises above them to an overshadowing height . . . ." Even his opponents admitted that "as an awakening preacher, he certainly possessed talents of a high order," but considered him all the more dangerous because of his ability.[23] What

[21] *Western Recorder,* May 9, 1826; Sept. 30, 1828; Apr. 13, 1830; Apr. 16 and Aug. 16, 1831, *et passim.*

[22] *Ibid.,* Oct. 6, 1829, and Dec. 28, 1830.

[23] Weld to Zephaniah Platt, Nov. 16, 1829 (Finney MSS), and James H. Hotchkin, *History of the Purchase and Settlement of Western New York and of the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Presbyterian Church in That Section* (N. Y.—1848), 169.

part of the opposition was due to jealousy and what part to honest conservatism it is impossible to determine.

Ministers, New England evangelists and laymen were irritated by his provoking directness. They found his voice too penetrating and arresting, his remarkable, hypnotic eyes too magnetic, and his dramatic and realistic description of Hell's torments too disturbing. They opposed his stinging denunciations of individuals and institutions. They objected to his singling out particular persons as the objects of condemnation or prayer. Particularly did they decry all groaning and weeping in prayer, the institution of the praying or holy band of lay assistants and of the anxious seat at the front of the church for the hopeful inquirers, and the participation of females in "promiscuous" prayer meetings. These were the much-debated "new measures."

Most of the New York ministers were favorable to Finney, but President Henry Davis of Hamilton College was alarmed by "certain prominent features" of the Oneida Revival from the beginning, or so he later declared.[24] And the Rev. William R. Weeks of Paris Hill, an extreme "Hopkinsian" Calvinist, made a slashing attack on Finney in his *Pastoral Letter* of 1827. He criticized the new-measures men for "Trying to make people angry," "The affectation of familiarity with God in prayer," allowing "Female prayer and exhortation," "Loud groaning, speaking out, or falling down, in time of public or social worship," etc.[25] The Oneida Presbytery stood by Finney and denied that the revivals were accompanied by irregularity or disorder and "*Resolved Unanimously*, That the patience and forbearance manifested by Mr. Finney under reproach, in not rendering evil for evil, has increased the confidence of Presbytery in his piety and judgment."[26] Very favorable, too, to Finney was the pamphlet entitled *A Narrative of the Revival of Religion in the County of Oneida,* etc., written by the Rev. John Frost and other friendly ministers and published in Utica in 1826.

[24]Henry Davis, *Op. Cit.,* 37 note, and 145–7.

[25]There is a sketch of Weeks in Fowler, *Op. Cit.,* 673–4. William R. Weeks, *Pastoral Letter of the Oneida Association, to the Churches under Their Care, on the Subject of Revivals of Religion* (Utica—1827). Weeks, in 1825, had withdrawn from the Presbytery and been a leader in reestablishing the Oneida (Congregational) Association. *Cf.* Oneida Presbytery, MS Minutes, V, 19 (May 25, 1825) and *Western Recorder,* July 19, 1825.

[26]The Oneida Presbytery, MS Minutes, V, 103, (Feb. 8, 1828), and *Western Recorder,* Feb. 12, 1828.

There were some, however, particularly in New England, who preferred to believe Mr. Weeks; among these were the revivalists Asahel Nettleton and Lyman Beecher. "They are driving us back into barbarism under the delusion of a new era," declared Nettleton in a letter to John Frost. Reverend Henry Ware, the scholarly Unitarian product of Harvard and Andover, who was a few years later to superintend the publication of a life of Jean Frederic Oberlin, was shocked at what he heard and saw of "the notorious Finney" on a visit to central New York in 1826. "The great leader is either a crazy man or an impostor," he wrote from Utica. And again: "He has talents, unquestionable talents, but no heart. He feels no more than a mill-stone . . . he is acting a cold, calculating part . . . . His tones of voice, his violent, coarse, unfeeling utterance, his abject groanings, his writhing of his body as if in agony, all testify that he is a hypocrite, and yet I try not to be uncharitable."[27]

Finney ardently defended his methods. When immortal souls were at stake he insisted that one should not be too nice about the means utilized for their salvation. A certain amount of excitement he believed to be absolutely necessary to get most people to act. It should be the aim of the pastor and the evangelist, said Finney, not to please men but to warn them in a most direct and impressive way of the imminent danger of their damnation.[28] In July of 1827 the New England conservatives met Finney and his western, new-measures men at a convention at New Lebanon, N. Y., in an effort to iron out their differences. In this they did not succeed in any large way nor was either faction persuaded of its errors. The chief result seems to have been to attract more attention to Finney and his great success as a revivalist.[29]

[27]A. Nettleton to J. Frost, Feb. 15, 1827 (Finney MSS), John Ware, *Memoirs of the Life of Henry Ware, Jr.* (Boston—1846), 179–181, and Benett Tyler, *Memoir of the Life and Character of Asahel Nettleton, D.D.* (Hartford—1844), 245–270.

[28]See Finney's first printed sermon: *A Sermon Preached in the Presbyterian Church at Troy, March 4, 1827, by the Rev. Charles G. Finney, from Amos III. 3; Can Two Walk Together Except They Be Agreed?*

[29]However, in 1828, at a similar meeting held in Philadelphia, Finney, Frost, Beman, Joel Parker, Lansing, Aikin, Beecher and others, but not Nettleton, nor Gardiner Spring, signed an agreement to cease public discussion of their differences. *Vermont Chronicle,* June 6, 1828.

## CHAPTER III

# *THE ROCHESTER REVIVAL*

THE Yankees pushed on through the Finger Lakes country from central to western New York. One of the towns to profit most by the building of the Great Western Canal was Rochester. Its flour mills were already important at the time of the second war with England, grinding wheat from the rich Genesee Valley with the power of the falls of the Genesee River. But the cost of transportation of the flour ate up much of the profit until the canal, passing over the river at Rochester on the famous stone aqueduct, gave easy access to the markets of the world. In 1827 four new mills were built and seven more before 1835.[1] In 1815 Rochester had had a little over 300 population; in 1830 it had nine thousand. This booming community provided a sounding board for various public figures. The actor Edmund Kean condescended to favor the inhabitants with a performance of "The Iron Chest"; the editor-politician Thurlow Weed began in Rochester his climb to political power, and Sam Patch chose the falls of the Genesee for his most spectacular and last leap in 1829. Rochester would be satisfied with nothing less than the ultimate in the way of preaching.[2]

The Presbyterians were already well established among the New Englanders in Rochester. The original First Presbyterian Church, located west of the river and just north of the canal on the site of the present city hall, was under the pastorate of the Rev. Joseph Penney. In addition there was the Second (or "Brick") Presbyterian Church and the Third Presbyterian Church on the east side, both founded soon after the opening of the canal. The Rev. Joel Parker, a graduate of Hamilton, where he was a classmate of Asa Mahan in 1824, and just out of

[1]C. B. Kuhlmann, *The Development of the Flour-Milling Industry in the United States* (Boston—1929), 55–56.

[2]Henry B. Stanton, *Random Recollections* (New York—1887), 21–28, and the sketch of "Sam Patch" in the *Dictionary of American Biography*.

Auburn Theological Seminary, had established the latter society in 1827, and it had thriven under his aggressive leadership.[3] As early as the fall of 1829, Josiah Bissell, an elder of this church, had invited Finney to Rochester, challenging him with an account of the sin existing among the "canawlers."[4] In the early summer of 1830 Parker, a thorough new-measures man, went to New York City to take the pastorate of the First Free Presbyterian Church which had been built up by Finney's preaching.

In September Finney arrived in Rochester to supply the pulpit of Parker's Third Church and "revive" the congregations of all three Presbyterian societies. The pulpit of the Second Church was vacated soon after he appeared.[5] Rev. Mr. Penney of the First Church gave him every encouragement. The way was opened for Finney to boom religion in the Genesee boom town.

Finney fulfilled all expectations. Henry Brewster Stanton, a young orator and politician, a reporter on Thurlow Weed's *Monroe Telegraph,* went to hear him. Late in life his recollection of the occasion was still clear. "It was in the afternoon," he wrote. "A tall, grave-looking man, dressed in an unclerical suit of gray, ascended the pulpit. Light hair covered his forehead; his eyes were of a sparkling blue, and his pose and movement dignified. I listened. It did not sound like preaching, but like a lawyer arguing a case before a court and jury. . . . The discourse was a chain of logic, brightened by felicity of illustration and enforced by urgent appeals from a voice of great compass and melody."[6] Finney was a sensation. At one of the early meetings held in the old First Church building every seat was taken and hundreds stood in the aisles. The structure began to give way; the walls spread and a scantling fell through the plaster of the ceiling. The congregation stampeded and trampled some in the crowd that stood about the doors. A few even jumped out of the windows into the filthy water of the canal. The accident

[3]James H. Hotchkin, *A History of the Purchase and Settlement of Western New York,* etc. (New York—1848), 488–491; Levi Parsons, *History of Rochester Presbytery* (Rochester—1889), 34, 242, 245–250, "Joel Parker" in the *Dictionary of American Biography,* and Hamilton College, *Complete Alumni Register* (Clinton [1922]).

[4]Josiah Bissell to Finney, Sept. 15, 1829 (Finney MSS). On Bissell see Parsons, *Op. Cit.,* 251–252.

[5]Hotchkin, *Op. Cit.,* 489.

[6]Stanton, *Op. Cit.,* 40–41.

seems rather to have stimulated the excitement than otherwise. Robert L. Stanton, who was in the panic, was converted and, along with a hundred others, including his sister and his brother, Henry Brewster Stanton, joined the First Church early in January.[7]

It was on the very day following the stampede that the Rev. John Jay Shipherd, who was to be the founder of Oberlin, arrived in Rochester on a canal boat from the East. He was a son of the Hon. Zebulon R. Shipherd, the Troy lawyer who had been a member of Finney's praying band, and was on his way to the Connecticut Western Reserve where he hoped to perform useful service as a home missionary. He and his wife and two sons and a school-teacher friend stayed over the week-end in Rochester in order not to profane the Sabbath by travelling on Sunday. It was a great opportunity, too, for him to renew his zeal and consecration in the warmth of Finney's presence. Shipherd preached in the Second Church in the morning, heard the great evangelist in the evening, and enjoyed "some agreeable private intercourse with him." Though it undoubtedly had great attractions for him, the young missionary refused Finney's invitation to stay in Rochester and help. On Monday he took a canal boat west, happy in the benediction of his idol and in the knowledge that the "work of God" in Rochester was moving on with such power.[8]

From September 10, 1830, to March 6, 1831, Finney preached 98 sermons and attended un-numbered "anxious meetings."[9] The work was effectively publicized through the *Rochester Observer*, a periodical established some three years previous especially to disseminate information about revivals, missionary work and the "operations of Societies for the spread of the Gospel and the promotion of benevolent objects."[10] Reports in the

[7]R. L. Stanton to Finney, Jan. 12, 1872 (Finney MSS), and L. Parsons, *Op. Cit.*, 244. At the time of writing this letter Robert L. Stanton was on the editorial staff of the *Independent* (New York) and was closing a long career as a Presbyterian minister in the South and West.

[8]J. J. Shipherd to Fayette Shipherd, Oct. 15, 1830 (Shipherd MSS).

[9]Parsons, *Op. Cit.*, 251–2.

[10]*Rochester Observer*, Feb. 17, 1827. This publication compared to the *Western Recorder* at Utica and the *New York Evangelist*. N. A. Saxton, the first editor of the *Evangelist*, became publisher and editor of the *Observer* in 1832, and conducted it thereafter under the name of the *Rochester Observer and American Revivalist* as a "thorough-going new measures paper." See Finney's *Memoirs*, 327, and Saxton to W. Phelps, June 25, 1832, and Saxton to Finney, July 17, 1832 (Finney MSS).

*Observer* were quoted in the *Western Recorder* and the *New York Evangelist* and other religious papers of the northern states. At the end of four weeks of Finney's preaching the *Observer* reported: "On the Sabbath no place of worship is large enough to contain the multitude that assembles. . . . Such a revival, perhaps, was never experienced where less disorder was witnessed, or less open opposition manifested."[11] Every issue contained some new details or favorable comments. "We have never known a revival more general among all classes," wrote a participant in November. "The youth, and those who are preparing for, and those who have just entered upon, the great theatre of life—the student, the mechanic, the professional man, and the politician—those who were seeking for, and those who were in the possession of office and worldly honors, have been arrested by the spirit of God, and a new song has been put in their mouths."[12] In December the revival continued "with unabated interest and power," though Finney showed signs of physical breakdown from over-exertion.[13] But he kept up the furious pace through January and February. A final great effort was made in late February and early March, an effort in which the evangelist was assisted by nine other ministers from various western New York communities. Among these were the Rev. William Wisner, who had been conducting successful revivals in his church at Ithaca during the winter,[14] and Asa Mahan, now pastor at the nearby canal town of Pittsford. Developments at Rochester had attracted so much attention by this time that hundreds came from a considerable distance and the church buildings were taxed to capacity. Sometimes it was necessary to hold simultaneous meetings, and on one occasion Finney preached the same sermon on successive nights to capacity crowds in the Third and Second churches respectively. "Enquiry meetings," held during the morning business hours, overflowed with "anxious sinners." ". . . It did seem," reported the *Rochester Observer,* "that the heavens were dropping down righteousness over our heads." Originally planned as a four days' meeting, it was continued "with una-

[11] *Observer,* Oct. 15, 1830.
[12] *Ibid.,* Nov. 12, 1830, and quoted in the *New York Evangelist,* Nov. 27, 1830.
[13] *Observer,* Dec. 24, 1830.
[14] On Wisner see William Wisner, *Incidents in the Life of a Pastor* (New York—1851), 130–5, 149 *et passim;* L. Parsons, *Op. Cit.,* 34; Hotchkin, *Op. Cit.,* 410, and Wisner to Finney, Oct. 30, 1830 (Finney MSS).

bated zeal" throughout the fifth day after which, "as the snow was rapidly melting, . . . friends from a distance were admonished to improve what remained to return home." For some time thereafter, however, local residents came together in two religious services every day.[15] Near the end of a long life of conservative, "old-school" Presbyterianism, Robert L. Stanton remembered that "all Rochester was *moved* that winter. . . . The atmosphere . . . seemed to be affected. You could not go upon the streets, and hear any conversations, except on religion."[16]

Converts poured into the churches. As has been noted, a hundred joined the First Church at one time in January, 1831. About the same number altogether were added to the Second ("Brick") Church by profession of faith. Mr. Wisner accepted a call to be settled over this congregation and carried on the work thus begun by Finney with great success until 1835. Altogether, in the four and a half years of his pastorate 372 new converts were admitted. The Third Church admitted 158 converts in 1831.[17] Mr. Finney had more trouble finding the right man for this pulpit. Asa Mahan was seriously considered, but he went to Cincinnati.[18] The place was offered to Fayette Shipherd, but he felt bound to stay with his parents in their advancing age since brother John Jay had left for "the valley."[19] For some time the church suffered from brief pastorates or got along with "supplies." The churches in neighboring towns like Henrietta and Pittsford also received a considerable accession of newly converted Christians. Two new "free" Presbyterian churches were established in Rochester as a direct result of the revival: the Rochester Free Presbyterian Church and the Bethel Free Church. The former fell into dissension and lasted only from 1832 to 1838, but the latter, under the lay leadership of such able and enthusiastic Finney men as George A. Avery and Michael B. Bateham, grew into the Rochester Central Presbyterian Church and was later chiefly instrumental in securing Finney's services for the revivals of 1842 and 1857.[20]

[15]An excellent account is in the *Rochester Observer,* Mar. 3, 1831.
[16]Stanton to Finney, Jan., 1872 (Finney MSS).
[17]Hotchkin, *Op. Cit.,* 490, and Parsons, *Op. Cit.,* 246–7, 251–2. The *Observer* (Mar. 31, 1831) gives slightly different figures. The revival extended also to the Baptists and even, it is said, to the Episcopalians.
[18]Josiah Bissell to Finney, Feb. 27, 1831 (Finney MSS).
[19]H. B. Pierpont to Finney, Jan. 6, 1831 (Finney MSS).
[20]Parsons, *Op. Cit.,* 194 and 254–9.

The influence of Finney's success at Rochester was felt in many other communities. Letters poured in upon the evangelist in ever increasing volume begging for his services. "Am pulled many ways," he wrote to Gale. "Don't know where to go." Theodore J. Keep, the son of the Rev. John Keep of Homer, came to Rochester to hear the great evangelist. He had just left Yale because of his participation in the great Conic Sections Rebellion, when the sophomore class refused to recite Conic Sections unless they could have their textbooks open. He had not yet found "spiritual peace" and decided to go to Rochester, hoping that the great Finney would help him. Sometime in December he appeared in the "flour city," "rather tall, . . . light hair, wears glasses & a very red plaid cloak." Soon he was writing home that he "hoped he had passed from death to life" and Mr. and Mrs. Keep were said to be "much overcome with the intelligence." In March, the Rev. Mr. Keep and the congregation of the Homer Presbyterian Church were urging Finney to come among them. He did not come, but John Keep and his son Theodore were added to the ranks of the Finney men.[21]

John Keep was a native of western Massachusetts, the seventh of nine children of a poor farmer. He entered Yale College in 1798 and "passed regularly, without interruption through the four years' course of study," waiting on table part time in the dining hall to pay his way. After studying theology privately for some time he was ordained in 1805 and preached for the next sixteen years in the Scotch-Irish town of Blandford, Massachusetts. He seems always to have been actively interested in Christian benevolence. Keep was one of the founders and charter members of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. He was a trustee of Hamilton College and for a time "President of the Board of Commissioners" of Auburn Theological Seminary. In Homer (1821–33) he was a dominant influence in the councils of the local Cortland Academy. From 1831 to his dismissal in 1833 he was overtly and enthusiastically aligned with the "new-measures" cause. "I am now among the older Minis-

[21]Julia M. Hubbard to Mrs. Finney, Dec. 6, 1830; Jan. 6, 18, 1831, and John Keep to Finney, Mar. 18, 1831 (Finney MSS). On Keep and the Conic Sections Rebellion see MS Diary of James L. Wright in the possession of his daughter, Mrs. H. H. Carter of Oberlin, and E. E. Salisbury, *Biographical Memoranda Respecting All Who Were Ever Members of the Class of 1832 in Yale College* (New Haven—1880), 169.

ters," he wrote in the latter year. "But I *will learn* from my younger Brethren, and rejoice when they stretch forward beyond me in winning souls to Christ—the farther, the better. . . . I verily believe that the Holy Spirit is with them [the new-measures men], and that their number will increase."[22]

Perhaps more important than the enlistment of the Keeps was the organization in Rochester of a phalanx of active revival Christians, mostly business or professional men and youths.[23] Though Josiah Bissell, Jr., died within two months of the close of the revival his leadership did not die with him. He had been associated with all of the first three Rochester Presbyterian churches. He had financed the construction of the places of worship of the Second and Third societies and to the latter had promised "a half of his biscuit as long as he had one."[24] He was especially devoted to the cause of Sabbath Schools and Sabbath observance, and was one of the first vice-presidents of the "Grand Union For Promoting the Observance of the Christian Sabbath" along with Arthur Tappan, Francis Scott Key and Lyman Beecher.[25] His "Pioneer" stage-line was known throughout the nation because its coaches never moved on Sunday and the drivers' morals were supposed to be supervised. Bissell had been primarily responsible for bringing Finney to Rochester and acted the part of manager and host.[26] Everard Peck was a printer,

[22]MS Autobiography in the Keep MSS.; James H. Fairchild, *John Keep,* reprinted from the *Congregational Quarterly,* Apr. 1871; John Keep, *Blandford* (Ware, Mass.—1886); Do., *Narrative of the Origin and Progress of the Congregational Church in Homer, Cortland County, N. Y.* (Homer—1833); Do., *Reply to the Strictures of the Journal and Telegraph upon his Narrative* (Homer—1833); Do., *Nature and Operations of Christian Benevolence, a Sermon Delivered October 21, 1818, before the Directors of the Domestic Missionary Society of Massachusetts Proper at Northampton* (Northampton—1818); Do., *An Address to the Agricultural and Ladies' Manufacturing Societies of Cortland County, October 17, 1822* (Homer—1823); Do., "Address" in John Brown, *Sermon Delivered. . . at the Inauguration of the Rev. James Richards, D.D.* etc. (Auburn—1823); Henry Davis, *A Narrative of the Embarrassments and Decline of Hamilton College* [Clinton—1833].

[23]H. Pomeroy Brewster, "The Magic of a Voice, Rochester Revivals of Rev. Charles G. Finney," Rochester Historical Society, *Publication,* IV (1925), 281.

[24]G. B. F. Hallock and Maude Motley, *A Living Church, the First Hundred Years of the Brick Church in Rochester* (Rochester—1925), 11–12, and F. V. W. Ward, *Rochester Churches,* 13–24, 35–37 and 184.

[25]*Vermont Chronicle* (Bellows Falls, Vt.), May 30, 1828. He was elected president of the Genesee Sabbath School Union in 1827, *Rochester Observer,* July 28, 1827.

[26]*Rochester Observer,* Mar. 14, 1828, and Obit. in *Ibid.,* Apr. 21, 1831. Brewster, *Loc. Cit.,* 279.

book-binder, publisher, bookstore proprietor and paper manufacturer from Connecticut. He was a leading member of the First Presbyterian Church and the first secretary of the Monroe County Temperance Society. He belongs in the list not only because he was a leading Christian and friend of the revivals and benevolent causes but because his young son was guided by the influence of these days through the Oneida Institute and Bowdoin College to a professorship in a later time in Oberlin College.[27] Samuel D. Porter, also a book-dealer, associated with Peck, was converted from deism by Finney and became an important worker for benevolent causes.[28] Then there was Levi Burnell, "Druggist, at the sign of the alligator, No. 4 Carroll st." Already in 1829 he was secretary of the "Young Men's Mission Society of Rochester."[29] Of course, there were the Stantons, Henry Brewster and Robert L., and their brother-in-law, George A. Avery, and his brother, Courtland Avery. The Averys were merchants; George dealt in "Groceries, Ship-Chandlery, Paints, Oils, Window Glass, etc." Both were devoted adherents of the new movement.[30] The young Englishman Michael B. Bateham may not yet have arrived in Rochester at the time of the Revival of 1830–31, but became a complete "Finneyite" just the same when he appeared sometime before 1834 and opened his seed store and nursery—"The Rochester Seed Store and Horticultural Repository." He later became editor of the *New Genesee Farmer* and, after that, of the *Ohio Cultivator*.[31] When the Bethel Free Church was built on the bank of the canal next to the Washington Street Bridge (at a location convenient for boatmen and canal-boat passengers), among the leading contributors were Samuel D. Porter, George A. Avery, M. B. Bateham, Aristarchus Champion (a benevolent business man like Bissell) and Everard Peck.[32] Here were more soldiers to fight the battles of the Lord!

[27]William F. Peck, *Semi-Centennial History of the City of Rochester* (Syracuse—1884), 664–665; *Rochester Observer,* Dec. 25, 1829; Rochester Historical Society, *Publications,* I (1892), 106, and *General Index* of *Ibid.*

[28]Finney, *Memoirs,* 298–299.

[29]*Rochester Observer,* Mar. 13, 1829, and Adv. in *Ibid.,* Oct. 13, 1831.

[30]Adv. in *Rochester Directory, 1834.*

[31]Blake McKelvey, "The Flower City; Center of Nurseries and Fruit Orchards," Rochester Historical Society, *Publications,* XVIII (1940), 128, and A. L. Demaree, *The American Agricultural Press,* 1819–1860 (New York—1941), 386–389.

[32]Walter E. Hastings *et al.* Editors, *A Century with the Central Church [Rochester], 1836–1936* (Rochester—1936), 2–3.

## CHAPTER IV

# *FINNEY ON BROADWAY*

FINNEY'S reputation as a revivalist spread throughout the North, and calls for his aid poured in from ministers and pious laymen in all quarters. Two voices were particularly loud and insistent: that from Ohio—"the Valley of the Mississippi"—"in a forming state ready to receive any impress which may be given it,"[1] and that from New York City, the growing metropolis, the sink of iniquity, "the headquarters of Satan."[2]

Even in the early nineteenth century there were two "frontiers," two fields of economic opportunity, the free lands of the West and the emerging cities. The Yankees flooded out into central and western New York, the Western Reserve and beyond, but many, too, merchants, shipmasters, clerks, lawyers, bankers, went to New York City and helped to win for it the primacy in trade and commerce. From the time when, soon after 1800, Joseph Howland, a Mayflower descendant, laid the foundations of the great Howland New York shipping interest to the fifties, when Captain Rowland H. Macy of Nantucket started his store and James Talcott came from Connecticut to establish his dry goods commission business, the invasion was practically continuous and rather disconcerting to the native Knickerbockers.[3] Now among these Yankee magnates in New York's business world were some whose New England consciences were troubled by the sin of the city and who felt the call to do something about it. Prominent among these were Anson G. Phelps, David Low Dodge, William E. Dodge, Arthur Tappan and his brother, Lewis. Phelps and David L. Dodge were among the earlier arrivals. The former had a Horatio Alger rise from poor orphan to New York's leading importer of metals. Both had come to the

[1]Asa Mahan (and T. D. Weld) to Finney, Feb. 28, 1832 (Finney MSS).
[2]Lewis Tappan to Finney, Mar. 16, 1832 (Finney MSS).
[3]R. G. Albion, *The Rise of New York Port, 1815–1860* (N. Y.—1939), 241–259.

city from Connecticut before the second war with England. Dodge was a dry goods merchant, known to history as a worker in the peace cause, the founder (in 1815) of the New York Peace Society, the first of the modern peace organizations. William E. Dodge, his son, married Melissa, daughter of Anson G. Phelps, and left his father's store to join his father-in-law in the firm of Phelps, Dodge & Co. and lay the foundation of the great Dodge fortune. The younger Dodge was at one time president of the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York. All three established during their lives reputations for great piety and benevolence and gave their money and services to various ecclesiastical, missionary and social causes. The Tappans, natives of Northampton, Massachusetts, and later arrivals, are better known for their various religious and reform activities than for their success as leading silk jobbers.[4]

In 1826, Judge Jonas Platt of Utica and his two children, Helen and Zephaniah, went to the great city to live, and joined the Brick Presbyterian Church on Beekman Street. Their pastor was the conservative Rev. Gardiner Spring; Anson G. Phelps was a leading member. The Platts brought to New York enthusiastically favorable accounts of Finney's work to supplement the contradictory reports in the press. In mid-June, 1826, Zephaniah Platt wrote to Finney: "If I know any thing of the human heart I am ready to say that some of our N. Y. churches are in readiness for *your preaching*."[5]

The Platts persuaded Phelps and the Dodges that Finney was just the man to stir Gotham from the lethargy of religious indifference and sin. They pointed out that he was young and handsome, had a penetrating and arresting voice and manner, and used a vernacular which had not been desiccated by years in the rarefied atmosphere of a theological seminary. But there was opposition among the clergy, particularly from the Rev. Gardiner Spring, himself. So, shortly after the New Lebanon "debate," Phelps invited Finney to a conference in New York at which leading church workers and ministers could meet him and come under the influence of his personal charm. Lansing, Aikin, Be-

[4]Albion, *Op. Cit.*, 248–250, 256–258, and sketches of all five in the *Dictionary of American Biography*.

[5]On the Platts see Finney, *Memoirs*, 326–7, and Z. Platt to Finney, June 19, 1826 (Finney MSS).

man, Theodore Weld and Zebulon R. Shipherd[6] participated, along with Zephaniah Platt, the Dodges, Phelps and certain city ministers, including undoubtedly Spring and the eccentric and radical Samuel H.Cox, pastor of the Laight Street Church which the Dodges attended.[7] The meetings, lasting for several days, took place in December, 1827, at Phelps's downtown home. (He had not yet moved to his "country seat" between 30th and 31st streets.) "I shall never forget those days," W. E. Dodge later wrote. "Such prayers I never heard before. These men had all come from the influence of the recent wonderful revivals, and were all filled with the spirit."[8] Finney left New York for Reading, but he was followed by letters pleading with him to come back and preach. The elder Dodge begged him to stop in the city on his return north. At least four ministers were ready, he said, to welcome him. Phelps wrote: ". . . We Shall Expect to See you In our Stupid, Poluted [*sic*] and Perishing City."[9]

The invitations continued. Finney went on to new triumphs at Philadelphia. In June, 1828, David Dodge congratulated him on the birth of a daughter (Helen, later wife of Jacob D. Cox). "Wm. is married to Miss Phelps." As soon as Mrs. Finney was able to travel Finney must come back to New York.[10] Phelps and Platt wrote in a similar vein in July. The next month Arthur Tappan first appeared in the picture as an advocate of Finney's supplying Cox's pulpit during his absence. In August, 1828, Finney accepted the invitation and preached for the first time in New York in the old Laight Street Church "with the entire approbation and satisfaction" of the congregation.[11]

But it was not until the autumn of 1829 that Finney had an opportunity to lead a real revival in New York—again "under the management" of A. G. Phelps. This time he preached in the

[6]Shipherd's attendance is implied in a letter to Finney, Albany, Dec. 24, 1827, and Weld's in T. D. Weld to Z. Platt ("Examiner in Chancery"), Nov. 16, 1829 (Finney MSS).

[7]On Cox see the *D.A.B.*

[8]D. Dodge, *Memorials of William E. Dodge* (New York—c. 1887), 199, 210–211. Dodge is wrong in the year as is indicated in various letters in the Finney MSS, for example: Zephaniah Platt to Finney, New York City, Dec. 20, 1827.

[9]D. L. Dodge to Finney, Dec. 18, 1827, and A. G. Phelps to Finney, Jan. 7, 1828 (Finney MSS).

[10]D. L. Dodge to Finney, June 26, 1828; Phelps to Finney, July 7, 1828; Z. Platt to Finney, July 15, 1828, Aug. 6, 1828 (Finney MSS).

[11]Arthur Tappan to Finney, Sept. 25, 1828 (Finney MSS). There is evidence on the time of Finney's appearance in Phelps to Finney, Aug. 21, 1828.

city for nearly a year, moving the services from smaller to larger auditoriums as his reputation grew. Many were converted and the Union Presbyterian Church was formed in October, 1829. This was the first of the several *Free* Presbyterian Churches established in New York, Boston, Rochester and elsewhere by Finney's followers. In them seats were free and transients and the poor were welcomed at every service. These churches took an irritatingly "Congregationalistic," independent attitude toward presbytery. They were strongholds of aggressive revivalism, reformism and organized philanthropy.[12] Finney's work in the city was so notable that the Synod of New York passed a resolution taking official cognizance of it. "The past year, to many of our churches," ran the statement, "has been a year of the right hand of the Most High. Jehovah has gone forth in the chariot of his gospel, and triumphed gloriously over many of the enemies of the cross."[13]

It was at this time that the Tappans supplanted Phelps in the leadership of the Finney cohorts in the city. They led in the coagulation of the converts into Free Presbyterian churches. Zephaniah Platt financed the *New York Evangelist,* the organ of Finney and his associates in the city, when it was established under the editorship of N. A. Saxton in the spring of 1830, but the Tappans took it over the next year and gave the editorship to the Rev. Joshua Leavitt. Leavitt was another Connecticut Yankee who had first come to New York in 1828 as agent of the American Seamen's Friend Society. He had been infected with the liberalism current at Yale where he had studied divinity two years. Before going to Yale he had been a practicing attorney, a background which must have helped to draw him to Finney. The *Evangelist* was a most important factor, to the end of Leavitt's editorship (1837), in formulating and disseminating the religious and moral ideas of the "radical" group.[14]

[12]On Phelps and the first revival in New York see also Finney, *Memoirs,* 275–276; D. S. Dodge, *Op. Cit.,* 210–211; Susan Hayes Ward, *The History of the Broadway Tabernacle Church* (New York—1901), and especially L. Nelson Nichols, *History of the Broadway Tabernacle of New York City* (New Haven—1940), 49–51.

[13]Synod of New York, MS Records, Book II (1823–1836), 210–211.

[14]See the sketch of Leavitt in the *D.A.B.;* American Education Society, *Quarterly Register,* IV, 316 (May, 1832); files of the *New York Evangelist.* Platt discussed his difficulties with the paper in a letter to Finney, Jan. 18, 1831 (Finney MSS).—"I stand alone as the Banker of the establishment, & I am now in advance over $2000.—Now is this right?"

Having stimulated this powerful impulse in the metropolis, in late August or early September, 1830, Finney departed for Rochester.

* * *

It was in 1829–30 that a certain burly young Irishman, who is an important figure in this story, came within the evangelist's orbit. John Morgan was born near Cork and was brought to this country at an early age. He was living in Stockbridge, Berkshire County, Massachusetts, with his apparently widowed mother, "an illiterate woman" of "remarkable piety," when the Congregational Church of that place made up a subscription to send him through the local academy.[15] He completed his preparatory work in 1822 and entered Williams College, where he became a classmate and lifelong friend of Mark Hopkins. Upon graduation in 1826 he went to New York City to teach in a girls' school.[16] Finney's preaching deeply stirred his somewhat easygoing nature. In the summer of 1831 he removed, with his young Vermont bride, to Utica, the heart of the Finney country. There he was taken under the care of the Oneida Presbytery "with a view to being licensed to preach the gospel." After an examination by a committee of Finneyite ministers he was received as a licentiate, becoming associated in that rank with Capt. Charles Stuart and Charles H. Weld, Theodore Weld's brother.[17]

* * *

Early in 1831 Lewis Tappan began to write to Finney begging him to come back to New York: "I do not think a powerful revival will take place here unless you do come. . . . The ministers here do not use the necessary means and will not. Depend upon it a blow must be struck in this city, heavier than anything we have had yet, or the revival will linger, and finally go out."[18]

[15]A transcript from the MS Records of the Congregational Church of Stockbridge furnished to the author by the Rev. A. R. Brown; John Morgan to Mark Hopkins, Dec. 31, 1842 (Morgan-Hopkins MSS).

[16]Biographical sketches of Morgan are: James H. Fairchild, "Sketch of John Morgan," President of Oberlin College, *Annual Report, 1884;* the *Oberlin Weekly News,* Oct. 3, 1884; the *Oberlin Review,* Oct. 25, 1884, and Calvin Durfee, *Williams Biographical Annals* (Boston—1871), 429–430.

[17]Oneida Presbytery, MS Records, Book V, 305 (Aug. 30, 1831), and American Education Society, *Quarterly Register,* VI, 150 (February, 1834). Morgan could hardly have studied at Union Seminary (*Cf.* Barnes and Dumond, *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld,* I, 71n) as that institution was not yet established at the time he was in New York City.

[18]Lewis Tappan to Finney, Feb. 2, Mar. 17, 18, Apr. 3, 1831 (Finney MSS).

But the evangelist hesitated. The revival in Rochester was proceeding with almost unprecedented success; urgent calls for his services were coming in from New England, from various points in upstate New York and from Ohio. The known opposition on the part of many New York City clergymen troubled him. His convert and lieutenant, Theodore Weld, had always favored delay in approaching the large population centers. As early as 1827 he had written: "Don't be in too great haste to get hold of the cities. . . . Kindle *back fires*, BACK FIRES, BACK FIRES far and wide. Let them stretch over the interior; the while you are engaged there the cities are preparing fast—when ripe—at the favorable nick of time—give the word—rally your forces and in the twinkling of an eye make a plunge—and they are a wreck."[19]

From Rochester Finney went to Buffalo and then to New England: Providence, where a firm friendship with Josiah and W. C. Chapin was cemented, and Boston, itself, where he reached a temporary understanding with Lyman Beecher.

Few men have been so sought-after. Each mail brought news of ripening fields awaiting his sickle. The call from the West grew louder, that from the metropolis more insistent. In the spring of 1832 Asa Mahan and Theodore Weld bombarded him from Cincinnati; the Tappans moved heaven and earth to bring him to New York. "Lord send thy servant Finney here," prayed Weld in Cincinnati. But Weld, said Lewis Tappan, knows little of New York and "thinks the centre of the World is where he acts." New York City, Tappan declared, was the key to the soul of the nation: "Do what may be done elsewhere, and leave this city the headquarters of Satan, and the nation is not saved. It is truly wonderful what mighty influence New York has throughout the country. The South, & especially the West, look to this city for moral impulse. 20 thousand strangers here upon an average all the time carry to every part of the Union the views & feelings formed while here. A blow struck here reverberates to the extremities of the republic." He admitted the importance of the Great Valley but declared that "very soon Railroads will bring all the business men to this city twice a year." "It is the opinion of all the Elders of the Free Pres[byterian] Churches

[19]Theodore Weld [and M. Brayton] to Finney, Mar. 19, 1827 (Finney MSS). See also L. Tappan's letter to Finney, Mar. 16, 1832 (Finney MSS): " . . . it is Weld's opinion that God has not designed you for any city."

that this city is the place for you to preach & that now is the time. May God give you wisdom & grace to make a decision."[20]

Turning a deaf ear for the time being to the supplications from beyond the Alleghenies, Finney came again to New York City in the late spring of 1832. Lewis Tappan, with the aid of his brother, Arthur Tappan, William Green, Jr., and other pious business men, took over the Chatham Street Theater and remodeled this stronghold of the Devil (all theaters were) into a revival hall in which two thousand persons could be seated. The renamed Chatham Street *Chapel* was dedicated April 23, 1832, at half past five in the morning in order not to conflict with business hours. Two Sundays later Finney preached two sermons and administered the Lord's Supper in it. Immediately after, he began a series of revival sermons which attracted large crowds and produced many converts despite the cholera panic.[21]

His preaching by this date seems to have undergone a considerable change; from this period there are no more accounts of the falling of the "slain" or similar "exercises" among his hearers. Perhaps it was partly the effect of his sojourn in Boston in the previous winter; perhaps it was the product of association with Phelps, the Tappans and other gentlemen of New York, perhaps only an evidence of greater maturity. It is quite clear anyway that the character of Finney's appeals had been transformed, not in essentials, it is true, but in tone. "I do not mean . . . that you have essentially changed your manner or stile [*sic*] of preaching but . . . you reason more than formerly," wrote a colleague in March. Another took him to task a few weeks later: "I fear that the peculiar circumstances in which you have been placed have led you rather to a discussion . . . of abstract theological subjects than to those soul-stirring appeals to the heart and the conscience by which you once brought so many sinners to the feet of Jesus."[22] Of course, he never did lose his power to stir the emotions of a great audience, as is abundantly testified by witnesses of his sermons of later years, but he never seems again to have gone to such great lengths in "breaking down" sinners.

[20]L. Tappan to Finney, Mar. 16, 22, 1832 (Finney MSS).

[21]Susan H. Ward, *Op. Cit.*, 24–25, and Mr. and Mrs. Finney to her parents, July 15, 1832 (Finney MSS). At the beginning of July deaths from cholera averaged about 40 a day in the city.—*Western Recorder*, July 17, 1832.

[22]H. Norton to Finney, May 19, 1832, and E. M. Clarke to Finney, May 23, 1832 (Finney MSS).

A more refined, more "cultured," more intellectual Finney was emerging—the Finney of New York City—and of Oberlin.

To assist in the work in the city Finney brought down from upstate a whole company of his followers: the Reverends Joel Parker, D. C. Lansing, Herman Norton and John Ingersoll, father of the great agnostic. Not least important was Thomas Hastings whom he brought to New York from Utica to introduce his ideas of church music as a form of worship. Apparently Hastings took direct charge of the singing at the Chatham Street Chapel (and later at the Broadway Tabernacle) and supervised the music at some dozen churches.[23]

But, from the time that he began to preach at the Chapel, Finney was in poor health. In the summer he fell victim to the cholera and was for some time unable to appear in the pulpit. A year later he was still a sick man.[24] Finally in the winter of 1833–34 his friends prevailed upon him to take a vacation in some distant land in the hope that the sea voyage would help him. He sailed on January 20, 1834, in a small brig, the *Padang,* bound for Smyrna. The voyage was one of the most unhappy periods of his life. His stateroom was oppressively tiny and the little brig was badly knocked about by storms during the journey of sixty-eight days to Malta. There, and in Sicily, he spent some weeks, but did not continue to Syria and Palestine as he had considered doing, but sailed for Boston from Messina, arriving at the former port July 18.[25] In the autumn of 1834 his health was rather worse than better. He returned to his labors in the Chatham Street Chapel with misgivings—seriously considering giving up preaching altogether. He even sat for his portrait "on condition that Br. Green shall give it to my family in case I should be taken away."[26]

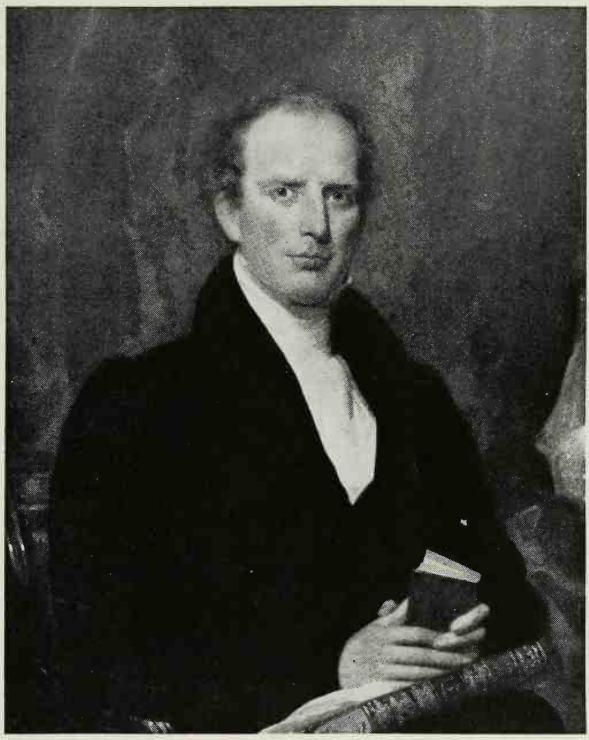
A prospect of greater and greater influence was opening up in New York. Plans were under way for the great Broadway Tabernacle especially designed for Finney's use. Isaac M. Dimond

[23]There is not much data on Hastings' work in New York, but see Charles Hastings to Finney, Sept. 24, 1832, and Lewis Tappan to Finney, Aug. 17, 1832 (Finney MSS), and Fowler *Op. Cit.,* 696–705.

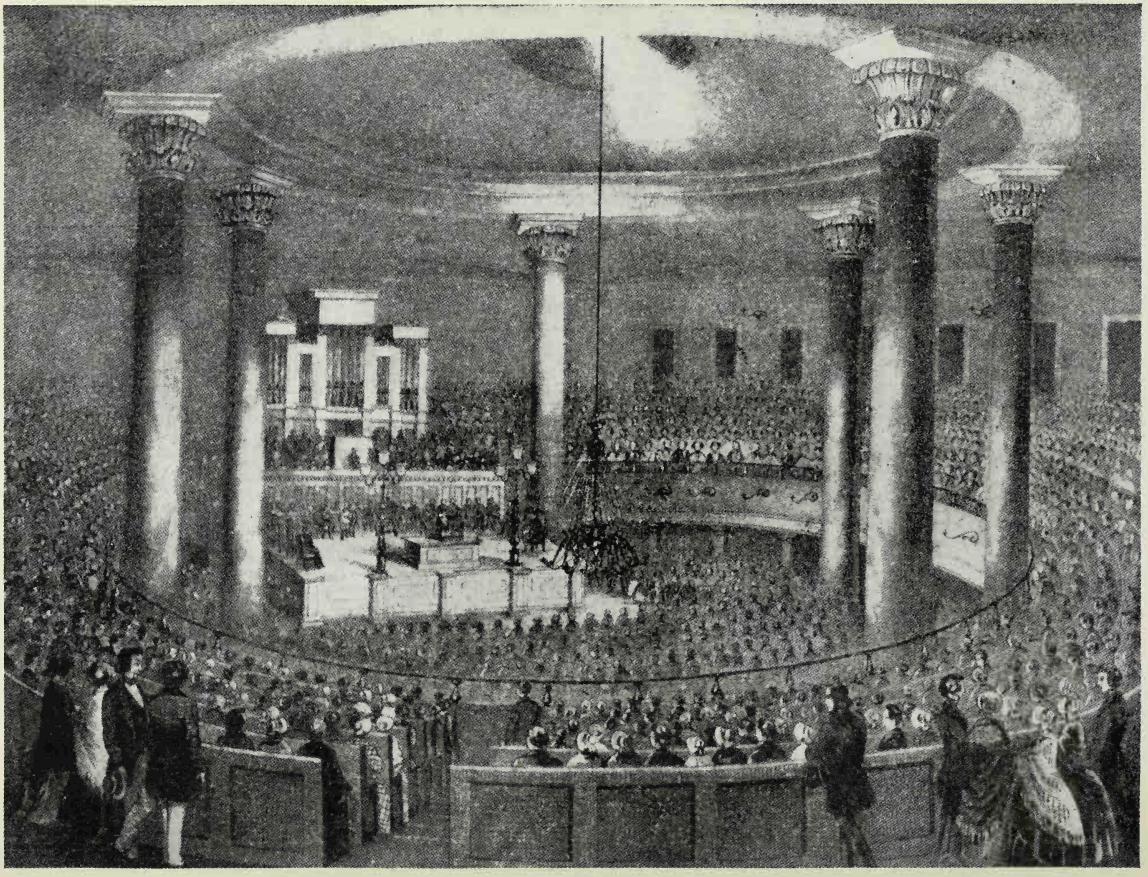
[24]Cynthia Brayton to Mrs. Finney, Aug. 28, 1832, and L. Tappan to Finney, July 10, 1833 (Finney MSS).

[25]*New York Evangelist,* Jan. 25 and July 26, 1834; Lewis Tappan to Mrs. Finney, June 7, 1834 (Finney MSS), and *Memoirs,* 325.

[26]Finney to Mrs. Finney, Nov. 10 and 24, 1834 (Finney MSS), and *Ohio Observer,* Nov. 27, 1834. The result was probably one of the two early paintings in the possession of Oberlin College.



CHARLES GRANDISON FINNEY
About 1835
(From a painting in the Allen Art Museum, Oberlin)



INTERIOR OF THE BROADWAY TABERNACLE BUILT FOR FINNEY

(From Susan Hayes Ward, *History of the Broadway Tabernacle Church* [New York—1901], facing page 39)

seems to have been chiefly responsible for the building of the Tabernacle. He was yet another Connecticut Yankee, since 1830 a successful manufacturer of jewelry in the city. Construction began in the spring of 1835 and, a year later, in the completed edifice, Mr. Finney was installed as pastor of the Broadway Tabernacle *Congregational* Church.[27]

Printed propaganda for the cause was distributed by the "Revival Tract Society," whose committee on publication included, at different times, Finney, William Green, Jr., Lewis Tappan, D. C. Lansing, Joel Parker, and Joshua Leavitt, among others.[28] At the beginning of December, 1834, Leavitt began the publication in the *New York Evangelist* of Finney's twenty-two Friday lectures on revivals of religion—reprinted in book form a few months later and in successive editions throughout many years, one of the most influential religious publications of the period. Further to spread the revival spirit it was planned that the new Tabernacle should contain a classroom under the choir where Finney could prepare enthusiastic converts for the practice of the "new measures" in the ministry.[29]

[27]L. Nelson Nichols, *Op. Cit.*, 58–61.
[28]*Rochester Observer*, Aug. 22, 1832, and *Vermont Chronicle*, May 22, 1834.
[29]*Memoirs*, 326–332.

## CHAPTER V

# *THE MANUAL LABOR SCHOOLS*

EVERYWHERE Finney appealed successfully to the young men: young lawyers, young business men, young farmers, young teachers and students. Many of them abandoned their former occupations and proposed to enter the ministry. The prospect of spending four years in the usual college course plus two or three years at a theological seminary daunted them. Some were already in their late twenties or early thirties and they were impatient to be about the Lord's business. Most did not have the financial resources from which to pay the cost of such an extended preparation; others were in poor health. Besides, did the traditional dose of Latin and Greek and Mathematics really in any practical way *prepare* for the ministry? Did the average college lay sufficient emphasis on piety and morality? Finney, himself, had intentionally avoided attending a college, and all emulated Finney.

New departures in revivals had broken the crust of indifference and formalism in the churches; new departures in education, especially designed to meet the needs of the current situation, furnished the logical solution of the problem. The Finney men were bold; they were already known as innovators; they feared conservatism more than experiment, if they feared the latter at all. Success in the churches evoked confidence, and the spirit of aggressive reform swept into other fields.

Rev. George W. Gale, while at Western, took several young converts into his home to teach them the arts and divinity as he had taught Finney, following a practice common both before and since the establishment of the first theological seminaries. The unusual feature was that these young men paid Gale for instruction, books and board, not in cash but by working on his farm for a certain number of hours each day. This was in 1826. Gale always considered himself the originator of the system of "manual labor with study," and there is no evidence to show

that he knew at the time of similar prior or contemporaneous experiments in this country or by Fellenberg in Switzerland.[1] Perhaps this is a case of simultaneous, independent invention.

By 1827, Gale was prepared to apply the combination of manual labor and study on a large scale. At Rome, on February 14, 1827, when the new-measures men were conveniently assembled for the annual meeting of the Oneida Presbytery, Gale presented to them his scheme for a manual labor school. The Oneida Academy was formally organized March 12, 1827. In the first announcement of the school, made public on that occasion, it was declared that its "primary object" was "to educate young men who have ultimately in view the gospel ministry." It was expressly provided that the instructors were to be required "to inculcate the truths of the Christian religion, as well as the principles of science." The students were to support themselves and the school and benefit their health by three to four hours of mechanical or agricultural labor daily. In April a hundred-acre farm was purchased at Whitesboro, a few miles from Utica, and instruction and farming began in May.[2]

The Reverend George W. Gale and the Reverend John Frost were, from the beginning, the leading spirits in the enterprise and were naturally appointed the first agents to secure funds. Mr. Gale and Mr. Pelatiah Rawson became the first instructors. In September Gale was able to write to Finney, "Our School is prosperous. We had an examination last month, much to the satisfaction of the Trustees. Our crops are promising. We have an excellent class of young men and they make as good progress in their studies as any class I ever saw."[3] Toward the end of the year the faculty turned in their official report to the trustees. In this it was stated that, "The labour performed by the Students has been, upon an average, three and a half hours a day. This is the only compensation which has been received for board and washing. . . . About forty acres of land have been cultivated—two for a garden, and the remainder for corn, potatoes, etc.

[1]Sketches of Gale in the *Dictionary of American Biography,* and P. H. Fowler, *Op. Cit.,* 552–554. On the experiment at Western see Trustees of the Oneida Institute of Science and Industry, *Third Report* (Utica—1831), 23. The work of Woodbridge, Stowe and others in publicizing the work of Fellenberg in the United States was, of course, subsequent.

[2]Trustees of Oneida Academy, *First Report . . . March, 1828* (Utica—1828), 1–2; Frost to Finney, Apr. 21, 1827 (Finney MSS).

[3]Gale to Finney, Sept. 6 and 8, 1827 (Finney MSS).

Twenty acres have been mown. Between forty and fifty acres of wood have been chopped, fifty barrels of cider have been made, and other work necessary on the farm. . . . The income of the farm . . . has exceeded the expenses of boarding the students, keeping of stock, hire in the house, and the hire of a labourer for a year, about $150. It is, therefore, an ascertained fact, that a student may defray the expenses of his board, by three and a half hours of labour, and without interfering with his studies." Twenty-seven students were in attendance during the first term, and twenty-three of these were active Christians and intended, for the most part, to enter the ministry.[4] In June, 1828, the Oneida Presbytery took official favorable notice of the school: "Whereas the Oneida Academy promises to be a great blessing to the church. . . . Resolved unanimously that it be recommended to the congregations under our care to contribute liberally to the funds of this infant and interesting institution."[5]

The second year of the enterprise was a discouraging one, as it was a season of excessive rain and part of the crops were destroyed by the overflowing of the river. Considerable progress was made, however, in 1829, 1830 and 1831. An additional farmhouse was secured and a considerable expansion in enrollment thus made possible. A barn and a cow stable were built and a two-story shop, fifty by thirty feet, where the students could make boxes when there was no farm work to do. The student Society of Inquiry established a reading room where its members could read periodicals, gratuitously supplied by their publishers: the *New York Evangelist,* the *Western Recorder,* the *Rochester Observer,* the *Sunday School Journal,* the *Home Missionary,* the *Journal of Health,* the *African Repository,* etc. A "Friend" in New York donated some five thousand volumes for a library. G. P. Judd, one of Finney's early converts, sent curiosities from the Sandwich Islands for a "cabinet."[6]

In June, 1829, a petition was sent to the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York requesting incorpora-

[4]Trustees of Oneida Academy, *First Report.* The trustees issued an earlier statement on Oct. 1, 1827, printed in the *Western Recorder,* Oct. 2, 1827.

[5]Oneida Presbytery MS Minutes, V, 16 (June 25, 1828).

[6]The second report of the academy was published in the *Western Recorder,* May 18 and 25, 1830. Trustees of the Oneida Institute, *Third Report . . . January, 1831* (Utica—1831). On the periodicals in the reading room see the *Western Recorder,* Mar. 22, 1831, and, on the conversion of G. P. Judd: L. N. Nichols, *Op. Cit.,* 46.

tion. The charter, promptly granted to the school under the name of the Oneida Institute of Science and Industry, entitled it to a share in the state "literature fund."[7] The first public "exhibition" was held in the Presbyterian Church in Whitesboro in August "in the presence of a crowded audience." There were ten speakers. "Among the number was a young Seneca chief, . . . who spoke in his own native dialect. This, together with the Latin and Greek orations, was of course unintelligible to the majority of the audience. . . ." The *Western Recorder* thought it "highly creditable."[8]

Students and instructors maintained a strenuous schedule. "The hour of rising and going into the field, by common consent, has been four o'clock A.M. in the summer months." Rising time, meal time, class hours and study periods were signalled by the blowing of a horn. The day was always begun with devotions. There were some classes at five, an hour before breakfast! Diet was frugal: "We have griddle cakes and molasses once a week," wrote one student, "rice and molasses once—hasty-pudding once, and a baked bread-pudding once. These we have in the morning. Twice in the week we have codfish and potatoes for dinner. For the remainder we have bread and butter and bread and milk." At each meal one student was appointed to read aloud while the others ate. "We are now reading the life of Thomas Spencer. No time is lost. Frequently we pass resolutions and transact important business at the table, while we are all eating as fast as we can." There was regular weekly drill in "declamation" and all students participated in formal debates on Thursday nights. All exercises were compulsory, including manual labor. "The plough, the hoe, the spade, the shovel, the axe, and the scythe, fall into the same hands that Virgil, Cicero, and the sages of Greece—Blair, Paley, Brown, Euclid, and Legendre, have occupied." Theodore Weld, who attended as a student but also acted as agent, was "monitor of the milking class," getting up extra early every morning to supervise the milking of thirty cows and "get the milk off in wagons to Utica by daybreak."[9]

[7] *Western Recorder,* June 9, 1829, and May 18, 1830.
[8] *Ibid,* Aug. 25, 1829.
[9] Letter from a student in the *Rochester Observer,* May 12, 1831; *Western Recorder,* May 25, 1830; G. H. Barnes and D. L. Dumond, *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld . . .* (N. Y.—c. 1934), I, xx-xxi; Charles Beecher, *Autobiography, Correspondence, etc., of Lyman Beecher* (N. Y.—1865), II, 313.

But piety and high moral purpose were even more central considerations than manual labor. The Society of Inquiry kept alive the student enthusiasm for missions. The revival atmosphere was constantly maintained. Some of the students walked miles to neighboring communities each week to teach Sunday Schools. In 1830, from their savings from labor at five cents an hour, they contributed two hundred dollars "for the establishment of Sabbath schools in the valley of the Mississippi."[10] In the "Narrative of the State of Religion" presented at the meeting of the Oneida Presbytery in February, 1831, it was noted that, "The Oneida Institute, in Whitesboro, has shared largely in the favour of the Lord," and that, of the sixty students, "most . . . have given satisfactory evidence of conversion to God."[11]

Of course, the new-measures men played a large role in sponsoring and financing the school. Finneyite ministers who supported the enterprise included, besides Gale and Frost, Samuel C. Aikin, Noah Coe, Luther Myrick, D. C. Lansing, N. S. S. Beman and S. H. Cox. George Brayton of Western gave $250.00; Finney's father-in-law gave a thousand feet of hemlock lumber; Charles and Thomas Hastings contributed cash and favorable publicity through the column of the *Western Recorder,* Josiah Bissell, Jr., of Rochester, was the largest donor. In 1828 Frost went to New York City where he presented the cause of the manual labor institution to the city liberals. Judge Jonas Platt introduced him and reported favorably on a personal visit to the school farm. Anson G. Phelps promised a hundred dollars. Platt, S. H. Cox, Phelps and Gardiner Spring signed a commendatory testimonial.[12]

But expenditures for buildings and equipment had outrun donations. There was a mortgage of two thousand dollars, and the total debt was nearer five thousand dollars by the end of 1830. The students were growing restless because theological instruction had not yet begun. Gale met the crisis by calling the Rev. Nathaniel Beman from Troy to teach theology and taking Weld away from his studies and his milking class to appeal for funds to the converts of the revivals. Weld had considerable success.

[10]Trustees of Oneida Institute, *Third Report.* 12.

[11]Oneida Presbytery, MS Minutes, V, 280–284 (Feb. 16, 1831), and *Western Recorder,* Mar. 29, 1831.

[12]Trustees of Oneida Academy, *First Report,* and Trustees of Oneida Institute, *Third Report, passim.*

"He is a lovely young man," wrote Mrs. Finney's sister who heard him at Adams, "and a wonderful man, and bids fair to be a very useful man in the world and in the church."[13] In December Gale sent Weld to Rochester to tap the philanthropic resources being developed in the revival there. "You know that you among others advised me to the establishment of this Institution," wrote Gale to Finney, "and I had reason to expect your cooperation so far as it was within your power." The subscriptions secured on the Genesee brought Gale and Oneida new hope. Late in January, 1831, following Weld's return to Whitesboro, Gale wrote again: "The Lord has given Brother Weld and this Institution great favor among the people at Rochester. . . . Monroe [county] . . . has given an impulse to a system of education that is to introduce the millennium. . . . Little did we think when talking over this subject what was to grow out of the little experiment . . . in Western."[14] But Beman did not come, and students began to look to other institutions where final preparation for the ministry could be secured.

Now, Hamilton College at Clinton, like Whitesboro only a few miles out of Utica, was greatly disturbed by these developments. President Henry Davis was pretty tough-minded and there might have been trouble anyway, but the fact that he opposed the revivals and that several of the trustees of the College were new-measures ministers (Frost, Lansing, Aikin, and Coe) certainly complicated the situation. President Davis, himself, believed that Finney's friends were primarily responsible for the difficulties.[15] "Some believe . . . ," he later wrote, "that he [Mr. Frost] and the other members of the board who are of the *new school*, have been hoping that Oneida Academy would be benefited by the prostration of Hamilton College."[16]

Rev. John Monteith, one of the professors in the College, was a follower of Finney and an advocate of more *practical* education

[13]Sarah Beebe to Mrs. Finney, Feb. 24, 1830 (Finney MSS). On the debt see Gale to Finney, Jan. 21 and Dec. 3, 1830 (Finney MSS).

[14]Gale to Finney, Dec. 3, and 16, 1830; M. Brayton to F., Dec. 17, 1830; Gale to F., Jan. 29, 1831 (Finney MSS), and Finney to Gale, Feb. 16, 1831, in Barnes and Dumond, *Op. Cit.*, I, 13 note.

[15]Most revealing is Henry Davis, *A Narrative of the Embarrassments and Decline of Hamilton College* [Clinton?—1833]. See also S. W. Fisher, "Historical Discourse," in *A Memorial of the Semi-Centennial Celebration of the Founding of Hamilton College*, etc., (Utica—1862), 76–77.

[16]Davis, *Op. Cit.*, 84 note.

and had assisted Gale and Frost in the establishment of the Oneida Academy. Davis suspected him, naturally, of being responsible for student unrest and of being allied with the "reformers" among the trustees.[17] According to Davis, when the revival began in Utica one Hamilton College senior prayed for the president "as an old gray-headed sinner, leading his scholars down to hell!" and in chapel Monteith prayed: *"Thou knowest, O Lord, that the faculty of Hamilton College have sinned in high places; and we pray thee, O Lord, if they are obstacles to thy work, that thou wouldst remove them out of thy way."*[18] There was an effort among the trustees to get Davis to resign and when he refused a plan was introduced by Gerrit Smith, the philanthropist-reformer of Peterboro, for the trustees to take most of the executive power out of the president's hands.[19] The plan failed of adoption, but the College tottered; many students left in mid-course to continue their studies elsewhere.

In 1829 Monteith left Hamilton for Pennsylvania where he established the Manual Labor Academy of Pennsylvania on a fifty-acre farm at Germantown. By the end of 1830 this school was declared to be prosperous except for pecuniary difficulties, with 23 pupils and 3 officers including the principal, an assistant teacher and a farmer. The students were required to labor four hours a day by which means they "more or less defrayed their own expenses, and established their health, invigorated their constitutions."[20]

When Weld went to Rochester in December and January, 1830–31, to collect funds for the Oneida Institute, he presented the cause of manual labor-with-study in persuasive terms. Perhaps he overdid it, for Rochester new-measures men decided to have a manual labor school to educate their own young hopefuls. The Reverend Gilbert Morgan, a graduate of Union College and Princeton Theological Seminary, at the time teacher of a school at Johnstown, New York, and a member of the Albany

[17]Davis, *Op. Cit.*, 31 to 36 notes, and 50 note. On Monteith's connection with the Oneida Academy see the *First Report, passim.*

[18]Davis, *Op. Cit.*, 32n. and 36n.

[19]*Ibid*, 136–144, and R. V. Harlow, *Gerrit Smith* (N. Y.—1939), 218–21.

[20]*Western Recorder*, Mar. 10, Dec. 16, 1829, and Jan. 18, 1831; Monteith to Finney (Germantown), May 7, 1829 (Finney MSS). Monteith was dismissed from the Oneida to the Philadelphia Presbytery, June 30, 1829.—MS Minutes, V, 174.

Presbytery, was secured to direct it.[21] In April, 1831, Morgan visited the Oneida Institute to study the operation of the manual labor system there, preparatory to introducing it at Rochester.[22] He reached Rochester in the latter part of that month and opened the Rochester Institute of Practical Education in May.[23] In mid-July, the Rev. William Wisner, acting as "President of the Board of Directors," issued the first circular announcing the establishment, principles, plan and purpose of the school: "*The Rochester Institute of Practical Education* was organized in May last. . . . Its students exceed forty, collected from four denominations of Christians, all equally privileged. It owes its origin to the late revivals of religion in the western part of the state. Many young men of piety and talents were anxious to prepare for the gospel ministry, and to support themselves by manual labor rather than burthen the church." The aims of the school were declared to be "to secure to its members vigor of health, and strength of bodily constitution, to cherish the proper moral and religious habits, and to develop their minds in a direction adapted to their high destination, and to gird the sterner and nobler energies of the soul to the power of great accomplishment."[24] The students, like their brothers at Whitesboro, rose at four, spent a half hour in devotions, and labored at least three hours a day. Instead of making boxes they, appropriately, made flour barrels.[25] As at the beginning of Jefferson's University of Virginia the students drew up their own rules and elected their own officers of enforcement. The success of this plan of student government was dependent, it was believed, upon the labor system. "Manual labor with moral truth does

[21]On Gilbert Morgan *cf:* American Education Society, *Quarterly Register,* II, 163 (Feb. 1830); II, 206 (Feb. 1831); VI, 151 (Feb. 1834); Princeton Theological Seminary, *Biographical Catalogue* (Trenton, N. J.—1919), 32, and A. L. Starrett, *Through One Hundred and Fifty Years, The University of Pittsburgh* (Pittsburgh—1937), 92 *et seq.* Morgan was president of the Western University of Pennsylvania (which later became the University of Pittsburgh) from 1836 to 1845 and, after that, taught in North and South Carolina. Barnes and Dumond have confused *John* Morgan (see page 29 this text) and *Gilbert* Morgan.—G. H. Barnes and D. L. Dumond, *Op. Cit.,* I, 71 note 5.

[22]Gale to Finney, Apr. 23, 1831 (Finney MSS).

[23]Rev. Gilbert Morgan preached in Rochester April 24, 1831.—Mary Mathews to Mrs. Finney, Apr. 24, 1831 (Finney MSS).

[24]The *Circular,* dated July 14, 1831, was published in the *Rochester Observer,* July 28, 1831; the *Vermont Chronicle,* Aug. 19, 1831, and elsewhere.

[25]*Rochester Observer,* Sept. 1, 1831, and Blake McKelvey, "The History of Education in Rochester," Rochester Historical Society, *Publications,* XVII, 20–21.

in fact elevate the character and call forth the energies of the soul. Idle, vicious and ignorant young men, surrounded by temptations, are incapable of self-government."[26]

The first public examinations of the Institute were held in January, 1832. It was incorporated by the legislature in April following, but the financial support received was wholly inadequate. In April also, Morgan announced the abandonment of the Institute and the founding of the Rochester Seminary of General Education.[27] Though apparently manual labor was given up, the emphasis on piety and "a course of study preparatory to the sacred ministry" continued in the Seminary.[28]

Gale and many of the other pious Yankees were persuaded that manual labor was to be the central practical feature of the coming American, Christian program of education. In 1830 Gale wrote: "Depend on it, Brother Finney, none of us have estimated the importance of this System of Education. It will be to the moral world what the lever of Archimedes, could he have found a fulcrum, would have been to the natural."[29] In July, 1831, Lewis Tappan, Gale, and others founded the Society for Promoting Manual Labor in Literary Institutions, and later in the same year persuaded Theodore Weld, a living, breathing and eloquently speaking exhibit of the results of manual labor-with-study, to accept the general agency.[30] In 1832 he travelled over 4500 miles, nearly 2000 on horseback or afoot, delivering over two hundred lectures on manual labor and temperance. His journeys were not unaccompanied by adventures. In Connecticut the stage in which he was travelling overturned, and in Ohio near Columbus it was carried away by the water at a ford. In the latter case he barely escaped drowning and believed that his recovery from the exposure was attributable to his temperate habits and a physique strengthened by manual labor. In May, Gale received a letter from Weld postmarked Danville, Kentucky. "He is not recovered from his disaster,"

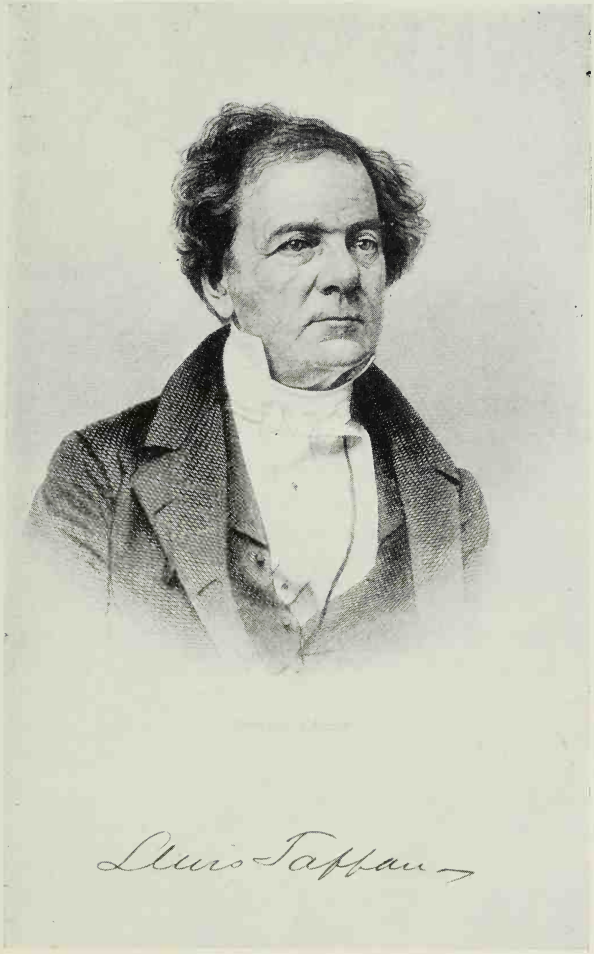
[26]*Rochester Observer,* Aug. 25, 1831.

[27]*Ibid,* Jan. 25, Apr. 25, 1832; *Rochester Republican,* Apr. 3, 17, 1832, and "Rochester Seminary of General Education," *Rochester Gem,* IV, 103 (June 23, 1832).

[28]Julius L. Bartlett, Corr. Sec. of the "Society for Missionary Inquiry of Rochester Seminary" to the Society for Missionary Inquiry of Lane Seminary, May 28, 1833 (Lane MSS), and Blake McKelvey, *Loc. Cit.,* 20–21.

[29]Gale to Finney, Jan. 21, 1830 (Finney MSS).

[30]M. Brayton to Finney, Dec. 22, 1831 (Finney MSS).




LEWIS TAPPAN
(From *Autographs for Freedom* [Auburn—1854])

wrote Gale to Finney, "thinks it doubtful if he ever does, . . . from what he says I judge that he speaks often, and with great effect both for the temperance and manual labor causes. . . . He is a marvellous man in many respects!"[31] In Kentucky, Tennessee, and Alabama he spoke once or twice each day on manual labor, temperance and female education. He observed the evils of slavery and discussed them privately with James G. Birney and William T. Allan in Huntsville, Alabama, and Marius Robinson, a student at the University of Nashville.[32] In November Weld was back in New York City delivering an address "on the salutory influence of regular exercise upon the human system" in the Chatham Street Chapel.[33] In the following winter he prepared at his desk in the office of the *New York Evangelist* the first and last report of the Society for Promoting Manual Labor in Literary Institutions.[34] This document contains the most elaborate formal printed statement of the case for the manual labor schools.

Weld had also been commissioned to find a site for a great national manual labor institution where training for the western ministry could be provided for poor but earnest young men who had dedicated their lives to the home missionary cause in the "vast valley of the Mississippi." Such an institution would undoubtedly attract many of Weld's associates who had been disappointed in the failure to establish theological instruction at the Oneida Institute. Cincinnati was the logical location. Cincinnati was the focal center of population and commerce in the Ohio valley.[35]

[31]Gale to Finney, May 26, 1832 (Finney MSS).

[32]Barnes, *Antislavery Impulse,* 39. On his lectures in the south see quotations from Weld in Tappan to Finney, Aug. 17, 1832 (Finney MSS).

[33]*New York Evangelist,* Nov. 17, 1832.

[34][Theodore D. Weld], *First Annual Report of the Society for Promoting Manual Labor in Literary Institutions* (New York—1833), vi—vii, 9—10 and *passim,* and Barnes and Dumond, *Op. Cit.,* I, xxii.

[35]Charles Beecher, *Autobiography . . . of Lyman Beecher,* II, 314, and J. L. Tracy to Weld, Nov. 24, 1831—Barnes and Dumond, *Op. Cit.,* I, 56.

## CHAPTER VI

# *CINCINNATI*

BY 1830 many conservative, Scotch-Irish Presbyterians were beginning to suspect that by absorbing so many New Englanders into the Presbyterian fold through the Plan of Union they had settled the Goths at the Gates of Rome. Yankee graduates of Yale, of Williams, of Hamilton and "alumni" of the Finney revivals were enabled by the Plan to infiltrate into the Presbyterian churches anywhere—in New York, in the Middle States, and in the West. The fundamental Calvinist doctrines of the divine sufficiency, predestination and the total depravity of man were threatened. The New Englanders accepted these doctrines in principle but acted in practice much like Methodists, insisting on "human ability" (with the help of divine grace, of course) to accept Christ and even perhaps to live a positively good life. This point of view was associated in the New Englanders' logic with active revivalism. Why appeal, said they, to a man to accept Christ if that man lacked the power of decision?

The first settlements in the New West were in Kentucky and the Ohio valley; the first settlers came chiefly from the Middle and Southern States. Their Presbyterian ministers got their inspiration from orthodox Princeton and they founded orthodox Presbyterian colleges: Transylvania (Kentucky), Jefferson (in Western Pennsylvania), Miami and Centre. Cincinnati's first Presbyterian minister, James Kemper, came from Virginia by way of the upper Tennessee valley to Kentucky through Cumberland Gap and then crossed north of the Ohio, a route followed by those of his parishioners who didn't float down from Pittsburgh.[1] Also a Virginian was the dynamic Joshua Lacy

[1]A. C. Kemper, *A Memorial of the Rev. James Kemper;* Earl R. North *et al. One Hundred and Fifty Years of Presbyterianism in the Ohio Valley, 1790–1940,* 6–19. On Presbyterian colleges see D. G. Tewksbury, *The Founding of American Colleges and Universities Before the Civil War,* 93–94.

Wilson who came over from Kentucky to assume the pastorate of the First Presbyterian Church of Cincinnati in 1808. Twenty years later, when Cincinnati was definitely established as the business center and cultural metropolis of the West, Wilson was the dominant ecclesiastical figure of the community. He was the natural leader in the defense against Yankee heresy.[2]

In the 1830's the invasion reached Cincinnati itself. The pseudo-Calvinists from the northeast were aggressive; and they were organized through the American Home Missionary Society, the American Education Society and the American Tract Society; they were backed by Yankee money from New York as well as New England and they were inspired by the Finney revivals.

First to face the redoubtable Wilson in the Cincinnati arena was the Rev. Amos Blanchard, a licensed preacher from Vermont. He was an outspoken advocate of the liberal point of view, a representative of the American Home Missionary Society. Ordained by the Presbytery of Cincinnati in Wilson's absence, the latter charged him with heresy and called for the revocation of the ordination. Blanchard accused Wilson of slander. Their differences were superficially adjusted in time for Wilson to concentrate his fire on another invader.[3]

In the spring of 1831 twenty "new-school" members of Wilson's First Presbyterian Church seceded. On April 9, 1831, they organized the Sixth Presbyterian Church of Cincinnati and, in June, called the Rev. Asa Mahan of Pittsford, N. Y., to be their pastor. Among the charter members were Amos Blanchard and Mary Blanchard, Franklin Y. Vail and Catharine M. Vail, William S. Merrell, William Holyoke and John Melindy.[4] Blanch-

[2]North, *Op. Cit.*, 70–76; R. L. Hightower, "Joshua L. Wilson: Frontier Controversialist" (MS Ph.D. Thesis, U. of Chicago, 1933) and an article of the same title in *Church History*, III, 300–316 (December 1934). One of the most important books on this whole subject is W. W. Sweet, *The Presbyterians, 1783–1840,* vol. II of *Religion on the American Frontier* (N. Y.—1936).

[3]Hightower, "Joshua Wilson" (MS), 160–176.

[4]Vine Street Congregational Church (Successor to Sixth Presbyterian), *Manual, 1878,* and C. B. Boynton, "Historical Address" in *Semi-Centennial Celebration of the Vine St. Congregational Church, Cincinnati, Ohio, . . . 1881.* M. E. Thalheimer, "History of the Vine Street Congregational Church in Cincinnati," Ohio Church History Society *Papers,* IX, 41–56 (Oberlin—1898), is apparently chiefly based on the two previous citations. It seems very unlikely that, considering the date, the slavery question could have been a factor in the founding of this church. The *Manual,* however, states (page 5) that the cause of separation was "pulpit defense" of American slavery.

ard's position has been made sufficiently clear. Vail had come to the West from Connecticut as Secretary of the Western Agency of the American Education Society, a new-school organization for the assistance of young men preparing for the ministry. It was he who presented the call from the Sixth Church to Mahan at the annual meeting of the Presbyterian Assembly at Philadelphia.[5] William Holyoke, one of the first three elders of the church, a coachmaker by trade, later became a leading abolitionist. His name often appears associated with that of John Melindy in religious and reform activities.[6] William S. Merrell, a former resident of Oneida County, New York, had been a classmate of Mahan's at Hamilton College. After graduation he had taught school for a while in Cincinnati and then in the South; in 1830 he returned to that city and opened a drugstore.[7]

Asa Mahan was known throughout his life as a bitter controversialist. He was usually in hot water. Before being licensed by the Oneida Presbytery on May 30, 1827, he had confessed to having circulated gossip and agreed to contradict it.[8] He preached at Pittsford, near Rochester, from November, 1829, to March, 1831, and was there associated with Finney's Rochester revival.[9] As a result of that revival the membership of his church increased considerably. However, when he was being considered for the pulpit of the Third Presbyterian Church of Rochester, though Josiah Bissell declared that he was "anointed of God," there were some reports of dissension at Pittsford due to his disputatious nature.[10] But there was no doubt of his enthusiasm for Finney revivalism and his belief in "human responsibility." When Vail extended to him the call from the Sixth Church he promptly accepted and preached his first sermon in Cincinnati to some fifty hearers on August 25, 1831, in the dilapidated

[5]American Education Society, *Quarterly Register,* IV, 315 (May, 1832), and "Letter from Rev. Asa Mahan . . . London, Eng., March 8th, 1881," in *Semi-Centennial Celebration of the Vine St. Congregational Church,* 71–72.

[6]See below, pages 155 and 160.

[7]"Letter from Rev. Asa Mahan," *Loc. Cit.,* 71–72; *History of Cincinnati and Hamilton County* (Cincinnati—1891), 849–850, and Hamilton College, *Complete Alumni Register* (Clinton [1922]), 26.

[8]Oneida Presbytery, MS Records, V, 80 (May 30, 1827), and G. W. Gale to Finney, June 6, 1827 (Finney MSS).

[9]Levi Parsons, *History of Rochester Presbytery* (Rochester, N. Y.—1889), 39 and 238.

[10]Bissell to Finney, Feb. 27, 1831 (Finney MSS).

second-floor auditorium of the old "College Hall" on Walnut Street.[11]

A clash between Wilson and Mahan was inevitable. Mahan was as aggressive as Wilson, another pseudo-Presbyterian of the Yankee tradition, and the champion of the seceders from Wilson's own church. In sermons, in charges before the presbytery, and in editorials in his personal organ, the *Standard,* Wilson blasted at Mahan. In particular Mahan was accused of saying that he had never adopted the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church and never would. Considering Mahan's combative nature and his theology, it is more than likely that this charge had some basis in fact. Anyway, a special committee of the presbytery, made up mostly of hostile conservatives, was appointed to investigate. On the other hand, William Holyoke and an associate, representing the Sixth Church, lodged charges against Wilson of "unchristian conduct" in slandering Mahan in the press. Eventually the charges and counter-charges were appealed to the synod, where a settlement was made.[12]

Blanchard, Vail, Mahan and their associates, having prepared the ground and sown the seeds, called for Finney to come and reap the harvest. Amos Blanchard wrote from Cincinnati, on the first day of 1831, using "the language of the Macedonian Cry 'Come over and help us'." He pictured the "Porkopolis" as a city of about 28,000 people "now increasing in wealth and numbers beyond a parallel in the history of any other city" and situated "in the heart, almost, of a country containing more than 4,000,000 of inhabitants, and capable of sustaining more than 100,000,000." There Finney would find, he declared, a great deal to be done: "The whole number of attendants in the 4 Presbyterian churches does not exceed 3,000. There may possibly be as many more in all the other evangelical churches. Six thousand subtracted from 28,000 leaves 22,000 who either do not attend anywhere, or only where *damnable* error is preached. . . . There is in this city a very large Roman Catholic cathedral, a Jew Synagogue, a Swedenborgian Church, 1 Unitarian, one Universalist, one Campbellite Baptist, and one Christian or New Light Society. The regular attendants at these poisonous fountains may possibly be 3 or 4,000. . . . Besides these nominal Christians,

[11]"Letter from Rev. Asa Mahan," *Loc. Cit.,* 71.
[12]Hightower, *Op. Cit.,* 178–180, and Sweet, *Op. Cit.,* 109.

we have a large number of Infidels, Owenites, Atheists, and Fanny Wright men, who with open mouth and daring front, lift high the arm, and rant out aloud their blasphemies against God." Even within the Presbyterian churches Blanchard found "a state of spiritual torpor." "Worldlymindedness exists to a great extent among the eldership, some going so far as to keep their pork houses open on the Sabbath where hogs are cut up for the market on Sunday. . . . When I look over the empty pews of our churches my soul is distressed and I am often led to exclaim 'O Lord how long?' " "O do take this matter into serious & prayerful consideration," he continued. "I have *faith to full assurance* that a wide and effectual door of usefulness is opened here for you—a door such as would have rejoiced the heart of Paul. . . . Do not disregard the cry of dying millions who are rushing dark and unholy into the gates of eternity. . . . Do not wait till Satan has made this city the high place of Belial—a brimming mountain of sin, which will hereafter send its torrents of spiritual death over these fair and fertile regions." In the following summer nine other ministers, including the Rev. Franklin Y. Vail, joined with Blanchard to petition the evangelist to come to Cinncinnati. Blanchard's invitation was certainly peculiarly adapted to appeal to Finney's fighting spirit and must have done much to strengthen his interest in "the dying millions" of the Great Valley.[13]

Early in 1832 Mahan, having done, himself, some pioneer work for more aggressive Christianity, led in an even more insistent supplication. Twelve ministers, fifteen leading laymen and Theodore Weld, then lecturing in the Valley, signed the petition of February, 1832. Mahan wrote the petition and led the list of signers, among whom were Blanchard, Vail, Rev. David Root of the Second Presbyterian Church of Cincinnati, Rev. Thomas Brainerd of the Fourth Church, Rev. D. C. Blood of Cleves, Gideon Blackburn, president of Centre College—a southern liberal, Rev. Thomas Cole of New Richmond, and Rev. L. D. Howell, teacher in the "Literary Department" of Lane Seminary. Among the lay signers were William Holyoke and D. W. Fairbank of Mahan's church, J. C. Tunis, J. H. Groesbeck, Robert

[13]Blanchard to Finney, Jan. 1, 1831; Vail *et al.* to Finney, July —, 1831, and Root to Finney, Sept. 27, 1831 (Finney MSS).

Boal and Dr. James Warren.[14] Mahan and Weld reenforced the invitation by direct, personal appeals. "Sure I am," wrote Mahan, "that among the numerous calls which reach you from different parts of the country none are so loud as that which calls you to this city. . . . God has raised you up for the great valley and it must have your labors." Weld seconded him strongly: "You never can move this vast valley by working the lever in Boston, New York or Philadelphia. . . . Cincinnati is the *spot* for you to to begin by all means. . . . Besides, here is to be the battle field of the world, here Satan's seat is. A mighty effort must be made to dislodge him *soon* or the West is un-done." Arthur Tappan and his brother and other associates in New York and Philadelphia were willing to finance Finney for an invasion of the West, but the Tappans much preferred that he should make his headquarters in New York City. Finney went to New York City.[15] As second choice Cincinnati took Lyman Beecher.

* * *

The Western Presbyterians felt that they should have their own theological seminary, where Western and Eastern young men could be prepared *in* the West for service *at* the West. The Rev. James Kemper, an educational pioneer in Kentucky and Ohio, and the Rev. Joshua L. Wilson were leading sponsors of the scheme and naturally thought that Cincinnati would be the appropriate location. Despite their efforts, the logic of the situation and the promise of a gift of land by Kemper and his sons, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church established their Western Theological Seminary at Allegheny-town, across the river from Pittsburgh.[16]

Cincinnati's disappointment was great but short-lived, for Yankee money did what the Presbyterian Assembly had been unwilling to do. New Orleans, like New York and Cincinnati and most other prosperous American cities, had its colony of New England-born merchants, lawyers, teachers and minis-

[14]Asa Mahan, *et al.* to Finney, Feb.—1832 (Finney MSS).

[15]Mahan and Weld to Finney, Feb. 26 and Mar. 20, 1832 (Finney MSS). Barnes and Dumond published only Weld's portions of these letters.—*Op. Cit.*, I, 66–68 and 71–72. On Mar. 21, 1831, Robert Boal of Cincinnati wrote to Absalom Peters of the American Home Missionary Society, begging him to send Finney "to get the people engaged in the work of the Lord."—Hightower, "Joshua Wilson," 168.

[16]Sweet, *Op. Cit.*, 78–79, and Hightower, *Op. Cit.*, 72.

ters. Ebenezer Lane and a brother, natives of Maine, were commission merchants in this great Southern port. Like the Dodges, Phelpses and Tappans in New York their consciences directed them to do something for religion and morals with the profits they made.[17] In October, 1828, they offered $4,000.00 to found in Cincinnati a manual labor institution "to prepare indigent young men for the ministry."[18] One of the apparent advantages of "manual labor-with-study" was that it impressed practically-minded business men favorably.

To supervise the establishment of the school the "Ohio Board of Education" was organized, its membership being made up of Presbyterian ministers and laymen, Wilson being president and Dr. James Warren, corresponding secretary. Elnathan Kemper, one of James Kemper's sons and a convert to liberal doctrines, gave land in Walnut Hills for a site for the seminary in the name of the Kemper family. The charter of Lane Seminary was granted February 11, 1829. The Rev. George C. Beckwith, born in New York, but then preaching in Lowell, Massachusetts, was appointed to a professorship in April, accepted in August, and arrived in Cincinnati in the following November. He "had 3 or 4 students during the winter, spent the summer following at the East" and resigned in August, 1830.[19]

The Lanes insisted on the manual labor system but some members of the board opposed this experiment. Wilson and David Root prepared a report favorable to manual labor early in 1829. President Robert Hamilton Bishop of Miami University, also a Lane trustee, opposed.[20] The following year an elaborate and favorable report on manual labor as practiced at the Oneida Institute, at Monteith's school at Germantown, at Mary-

[17]Truman Parmelee of Utica, son-in-law of Judge Jonas Platt, partner of Milton Brayton, one-time apprentice in Thomas Hastings' printing establishment, and an active Finneyite, became a merchant in New Orleans, built a Presbyterian Church there and called Joel Parker to preach in it.—Fowler, *Presbyterianism . . . Central New York,* 715–719, and Barnes and Dumond, *Op. Cit.,* I, 17n and 50–51n.

[18]James Warren, MS [Report on the History of Lane Seminary, 1828–1829] (Lane MSS). The most important printed source on the founding of the Lane Seminary is Lane Theological Seminary, *History of the Foundations and Endowment and Catalogue . . . of the Lane Theological Seminary* (Cincinnati—1848).

[19]Various items in the Lane MSS: especially Beckwith to Warren, Aug. 11, 1829, Aug. 24, 1830, and to Vail, Aug. 25, 1830; Vail to Exec. Com. of Lane Sem., Apr. 20, 1836, and a copy of the *Cincinnati Pandect,* Sept. 8, 1829. On Beckwith see Andover Seminary, *General Catalogue, 1880,* page 55.

[20]Root and Wilson's Report, dated Mar. 23, 1829, is in the Lane MSS.

ville, Tennessee, and elsewhere, was presented to the Executive Committee of the Board.[21] In July, 1830, Beckwith visited the Oneida Institute and wrote back to Cincinnati that manual labor worked well and that the farmers and mechanics of the neighborhood approved of it.[22] In January, 1831, G. W. Gale of Oneida recommended a steward to supervise the seminary farm at Walnut Hills; in February the trustees made the appointment. But in the winter of 1830-31, Lane Seminary was in a state of suspended animation. There were no teachers and apparently only two students, Amos Dresser and Horace Bushnell, who had come out from the Oneida Institute and had been given special permission by the trustees to occupy rooms in the lonesome seminary building.[23]

At the beginning, conservatives and radicals, Virginians and Yankees, appear to have teamed up effectively in behalf of the seminary. But before 1831 the leadership had passed from Wilson and his local supporters to the Eastern men. On September 20, 1830, the Board met at Franklin Vail's house, appointed him agent, apparently at his own suggestion, and directed him to seek advice and money in the East where Beckwith had failed. Wilson consented though he expressed a lack of confidence in the outcome. Vail hastened away, "there being no time to be lost," as he later wrote, "if the Institution was to be secured in the hands of the New School Men."[24] Vail's friends in the Eastern cities suggested that if Lyman Beecher could be secured to head Lane Seminary money would undoubtedly follow. The trustees accepted the recommendation enthusiastically and on October 22 unanimously appointed Beecher "President of Lane Seminary and Professor of Didactic & Polemic Theology."[25] True, Beecher was preaching in a *Congregational* church at Boston, but Vail expressed confidence, in a letter to Dr. Warren, that there would be "no difficulty in having the Dr. Presbyterianized."[26]

[21]Corresponding Secretary of Lane Seminary, "Manual Labor Statistics," 1830 (Lane MSS).

[22]Beckwith to Wilson, July 21, 1830 (Lane MSS).

[23]Pelatiah Rawson and G. W. Gale to Vail, Jan. 27, 1831 (Lane MSS), and Lane Seminary Trustees, MS Minutes, Dec. 13, 1830 and Feb. 15, 1831.

[24]Vail to the Exec. Com. of Lane Sem., Apr. 20, 1836 (Lane MSS), Lane Sem. Trustees, MS Minutes, Sept. 20, 1830, and *History of the Founding . . . of the Lane Theological Seminary*, 10–11.

[25]*Ibid.*, 11–12, and MS Minutes, Oct. 22, 1830.

[26]Vail to Warren, Nov. 11, 1830 (Lane MSS).

The funds did follow the nomination, as had been hoped. Arthur Tappan, one of Finney's good angels, agreed to give the income from $20,000 to the support of the school if Beecher accepted. Oliver Eastman, who was Vail's successor as agent, obtained thousands more in subscriptions, but everything depended on Beecher, and Beecher hesitated. His congregation in Boston wanted him to stay, and opposition developed in Cincinnati.[27]

Finney and Beecher had apparently buried the hatchet. In August, 1831, Beecher wrote to Finney: ". . . You and I are, as much, perhaps even more, *one* than almost any two men whom God has been pleased to render conspicuous in his church."[28] After all, they both believed in "human ability" and the efficacy of revivals. In the following winter Beecher welcomed Finney when he went to Boston. In February, 1832, Dirck C. Lansing wrote to Finney asking him to intercede with Beecher in behalf of Lane Seminary, his acceptance of the appointment being "of vital importance to the cause of truth & revivals there."[29] Perhaps conservatives in the East informed Wilson of this *rapprochement.* Certainly his suspicions of Beecher were aroused. On November 8, 1831, Asa Mahan, the arch-radical in the West, was appointed a trustee of Lane Seminary. Nine days later Wilson submitted his resignation as president and member of the Board. In his letter of resignation he denounced the election of Mahan and the appointment of Beecher. "Dr. B. is not a Presbyterian—nor can he honestly become so without a great change in his theological opinions." It seemed to him to be "the full determination of the Majority . . . to render the Lane Seminary entirely subservient to the New School Theology."[30]

Beecher had been deeply interested in the opportunity from the beginning. "I have thought seriously of going over to Cincinnati . . .," he wrote earlier to a daughter, "to spend the remnant of my days in that great conflict. . . . If we gain the West, all is safe: if we lose it, all is lost." He had, he said, "a feeling as if the great battle is to be fought in the Valley of the Mis-

[27]There are various papers on the Tappan subscription in the Lane MSS.
[28]Beecher to Finney, Aug. 2, 1831 (Finney MSS).
[29]Lansing to Finney, Feb. 25, 1832 (Finney MSS).
[30]Lane Seminary Trustees, MS Minutes, Nov. 8, 1831, and Wilson to the Trustees of Lane Seminary, Nov. 17, 1831 (Lane MSS).

sissippi."[31] Another official invitation was extended to him in January, 1832, and in June he accepted.[32] On October 19 Oliver Eastman, now financial agent, wrote from Philadelphia: "The Dr. and his family left here today in an extra stage for Wheeling. His wife, sister, and six children are with him, nine souls. Should he be prospered on his way he will be with you on Saturday of next week [8 days] or early the week after. I rejoice that he is on his way."[33] Indeed, all the friends of Lane Seminary must have drawn a sigh of relief. It was now two years since the appointment was first made. Beecher had been "Presbyterianized" by being admitted to Finney's Third Presbytery in New York City, and an effort of the Rev. Gardiner Spring to get the Synod of New York to revoke this action had failed. On December 26, 1832, Beecher and Professor Thomas J. Biggs were inaugurated together. In January, 1833, Arthur Tappan authorized Vail to draw on him for Beecher's salary.[34]

But Lane had had students even before it had a regular faculty. In 1831, when the Rev. Lewis D. Howell, a student at Auburn Seminary at the time of Finney's revival there, was interim teacher of the Literary Department, there were fifty young men attending the seminary. Amos Dresser was the only New Yorker among them, but this was not to last long.[35] Three Oneida students went west to teach country schools in the winter of 1831-32. George Whipple and J. L. Tracy went to Kentucky; Calvin Waterbury got a school at Newark on the Licking River in Ohio. When in the spring Waterbury talked too much temperance, the inhabitants threatened to ride him out of town on a rail. He prudently climbed aboard a raft and floated down to Cincinnati.[36] There, he and Dresser were soon joined by two other Oneidas, Sereno W. Streeter and Edward Weed, and by Henry Brewster

[31]Charles Beecher, *Autobiography, Correspondence, etc., of Lyman Beecher* (N. Y.—1865), II, 224.

[32]MS Minutes, Jan. 23 and July 21, 1832, and Vail to Blanchard, June 21, 1832 (Lane MSS).

[33]Eastman to Vail, Oct. 19, 1832 (Lane MSS).

[34]Hightower, *Op. Cit.*, 185–187; O. Eastman to Vail, Oct. 22, 1832, and Tappan to Vail, Jan. 24, 1833 (Lane MSS).

[35]MS "Catalogue of Students in Lane Seminary, 1831" (Lane MSS). On. L. D. Howell *cf.* Lane Theol. Sem., *Catalogue, 1881,* and Fowler, *Presbyterianism . . . Central New York,* 594. It will be remembered that he was one of those to sign the call to Finney to come to Cincinnati. Bushnell appears to have dropped out.

[36]Tracy to Weld, Nov. 24, 1831, and Waterbury *et al* to Weld, Aug. 2, 1832, Barnes and Dumond, *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, I,* 56–58 and 78–87.

Stanton from Rochester. Theodore Weld stopped at Cincinnati twice on his manual labor lecture tour—in February and March, 1832, and in the following September. On the earlier visit he delivered several lectures and supported the call to Finney to come west. Lane, he concluded, would do as a manual labor theological school if Beecher would come. The Oneidas need look no farther. It was worthy of the support of the Tappans and their friends and of the manual labor society. Weld adopted the seminary as his own and told the trustees what appointments to make.[37] In Weld's absence the other New York-Yankee students managed the school through Asa Mahan.[38]

When Beecher and Biggs were inaugurated in December, 1832, the enrollment of students had increased to ninety.[39] But the invasion from the East had just begun. Stanton returned to Rochester in the spring of 1833, promising to bring back others from his home town if "the advantages of instruction-room accommodations, etc." were made "vastly superior to those of last summer."[40] "I shall probably visit Oneida Institute about the 10th of April," he added, "where I shall find others whose eyes are turned westward. As many of these brethren will go down the Allegheny either in Rafts or Skiffs during the high water, you will see the importance of giving me *an immediate* reply to this." Early in June, Stanton and Weld and six other young Finneyites arrived in Cincinnati, having completed their journey down the river from Rochester and Oneida. They were promptly admitted to the seminary on the recommendation of two other "Oneidas" already in attendance.[41] The tempo of the seminary was sharply stepped up, its real head now being on the ground. "Weld is here & we are glad," wrote Professor Biggs to Vail on July 2.[42]

Lane became definitely a school for educating young Yankees *in* the West. Of the forty members of the first theological class

[37]Weld to Birney, Sept. 27, 1832—Dumond, *Birney Letters*, I, 26–29.

[38]On this peculiar situation see Stanton, Weed, Streeter and Waterbury to Weld, Aug. 2. 1832—Barnes and Dumond, I, 78–87.

[39]Report of F. Y. Vail in the *Western Recorder*, Dec. 18, 1832.

[40]H. B. Stanton to Vail, March 18, 1833 (Lane MSS).

[41]The members of this party were, besides Weld and H. B. Stanton, Lucius H. Parker, George D. Stanton, Courtland Avery, Samuel Wells, Ezra A. Poole, and Charles P. Bush.—List of students admitted on June 12, 1833, and Recommendation for admission signed by S. F. Porter and Edward Weed, dated May 28, 1833 (Lane MSS).

[42]Lane MSS.

listed in the *General Catalogue* of 1881 the antecedents of thirty-seven are known, and thirty-one of these were Yankees from New England or upstate New York. Lane was Oneida moved west. In 1834, or before, twenty-four former students at Oneida Institute were enrolled in the literary or theological departments at Lane.[43] Eight students, including Henry B. Stanton and his two brothers, came from Rochester and vicinity. Several of these had studied at the Rochester Institute of Science and Industry.[44] Two Yale men came to Lane.[45] John Tappan Pierce graduated from Harvard in 1831 and came to Lane from the Princeton Theological Seminary where he had spent but eight months.[46] Thomas Williamson, George G. Porter, and Josiah Porter from South Carolina, William T. Allan from Alabama and James A. Thome from Kentucky certainly found themselves in a nest of Yankees. Marius R. Robinson was a graduate of the University of Nashville, Tennessee; Huntington Lyman had spent some time in Louisiana; Andrew Benton had been an agent of the American Bible Society in Missouri, but the first two were born in New York and the last in Connecticut.[47] It must have been

[43]The author has been able to identify that number conclusively. They were: John Watson Alvord, George Bristol, Charles Peck Bush, Horace Bushnell, Amos Dresser, Alexander Duncan, Hiram Foote, Augustus Hopkins, Russell Jesse Judd, John J. Miter, Joseph Hitchcock Payne, Ezra Abell Poole, Samuel Fuller Porter, Charles Stewart Renshaw, Robert L. Stanton, Asa A. Stone, Sereno Wright Streeter, Calvin Waterbury, Augustus Wattles, Edward Weed, Theodore Dwight Weld, Samuel T. Wells, George Whipple, and Hiram Wilson. These identifications were made from original sources: the letters (but *not* the footnotes) in Barnes and Dumond, *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld*; Porter's and Weed's Recommendation of students to the Lane Faculty, May 28, 1833 (Lane MSS); manuscripts in the Oberlin College Alumni Records (on Amos Dresser amd S. F. Porter), the list of Oneida students in the *Sketch of the Condition and Prospects of the Oneida Institute* (Utica—1834); C. S. Renshaw's letter to Finney, July 15, 1833; R. L. Stanton's letter to Finney, Jan. 12, 1872 (Finney MSS), and the Lane Seminary *General Catalogue, 1828–1881.*

[44]Those from Rochester were Courtland Avery, Charles P. Bush, Lucius H. Parker (brother of the Rev. Joel Parker), G. D., H. B. and R. L. Stanton, Elisha Barber Sherwood and James Steele. Bush and R. L. Stanton, it will be noted, had attended the Oneida Institute. Four: Bush, H. B. Stanton, Sherwood and Steele, are definitely known to have attended the Rochester Institute. *Cf.* on Bush: Porter and Weed's Recommendation cited above; on Sherwood: E. B. Sherwood, *Fifty Years on the Skirmish Line* (Chicago—c. 1893), pages 21–23, and on Steele: Samuel F. Steele, MS "Sketch of James Steele's Life."

[45]President Jeremiah Day wrote from Yale a letter recommending George Clark's admission to Lane, Oct. 8, 1833 (Lane MSS). Zerah Kent Hawley graduated from Yale with the Class of 1833.—Lane Seminary, *General Catalogue, 1828—1881.*

[46]Princeton Theological Seminary, *Biographical Catalogue, 1909,* page 113.

[47]On Robinson see C. B. Galbreath, "Anti-Slavery Movement in Columbiana County," *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly,* XXX, 388–9 (Oct., 1921). On the others see the Lane *Catalogue,* 1881.

something of a shock to the real Southerners when on May 28, 1833, James Bradley, "a man of colour" was admitted to the Literary Department.[48]

Of course, it was necessary to expand the faculty. Calvin E. Stowe left Dartmouth for a Lane professorship on condition that $500.00 of his salary should be paid in advance.[49] George Whipple, one of the Oneidas, abandoned his school in Kentucky to study theology and teach elementary courses at the seminary.[50] In mid-summer of 1833 John Morgan arrived to teach in the Literary Department. He had been recommended for the appointment by Professor Chester Dewey, active anti-slavery worker of the Williams College faculty,[51] by Joshua Leavitt, editor of the *New York Evangelist*, and by Finney, himself. "I have had considerable contact with Mr. Morgan," wrote Finney, "& so far as I am qualified to judge, I most cordially concur with the sentiments expressed above by Mr. Leavitt."[52] Morgan became the one member of the faculty closest to the liberal, Yankee, Finneyite group of students, their trusted adviser and confidant. Weld wrote of him in June, 1834: "I know of no man whose views on all prudential matters are more thoroughly judicious and whose comprehensive grasp of difficult subjects in all their relations is more *perfect*."[53] Morgan played the same rôle in the faculty that Mahan did among the trustees.

The students at Lane took the initiative in the affairs of the seminary and practiced piety mixed with practicality in the Oneida manner. In March of 1833 thirty-two students, including apparently all the Oneida Institute "alumni" then present, petitioned against the serving of that harmful and expensive drink, coffee, at the boarding house.[54] In August another student committee went so far as to recommend the diet which they believed was "necessary for the promotion of health and success

[48]Lists of students admitted (Lane MSS).

[49]Stowe to Mahan, Oct. 20, 1832, and to Vail, Mar. 18, 1832 (Lane MSS).

[50]Barnes and Dumond, *Op. Cit.*, I, 51n.

[51]On his early career see above, page 29. Dewey's letter of recommendation, May 6, 1833, is in the Lane MSS. *Cf.* sketch of Dewey in the *Dictionary of American Biography*.

[52]Leavitt's and Finney's letter, May 9, 1833, is in the Lane MSS. Biggs wrote to Vail, July 2, 1833, that Morgan had not yet arrived, but "We look for him daily."—Lane MSS.

[53]Weld to Birney, June 17, 1834, in D. L. Dumond, Ed., *Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831–1857*, I, 115.

[54]Petitions in Lane MSS.

in their studies."[55] Manual labor was elaborately organized. The work on the farm was in charge of a board of monitors and a student monitor-general, Samuel Wells, formerly of Oneida.[56] The printing shop was supervised by a committee of students made up of James Steele, formerly of the Rochester Institute; R. L. Stanton, an "Oneida," and Marius R. Robinson. Elaborate rules were drawn up for the "Printing Department."[57] The student printers printed Webster's *Spelling Book* and "Dr. Eberel's Treatise on the Diseases of Children." Alexander McKellar, a skilled cabinet-maker, and others made furniture in the mechanical department.[58] The Society of Inquiry Concerning Missions was very active,[59] and many students taught Sunday Schools in Cincinnati or nearby.

[55]Report, dated Aug. 12, 1833, in Lane MSS.

[56]T. J. Biggs to Vail, July 2, 1833 (Lane MSS).

[57]"Print Shop Report, 1833," and "Rules . . . for the regulation of the Printing Department [1833]" (Lane MSS).

[58]Andrew Reed and James Matheson, *A Narrative of the Visit to the American Churches by the Deputation from the Congregational Union of England and Wales* (N. Y.—1835), II, 129–134. McKellar's special skill is mentioned in connection with his admission to Lane on May 22, 1833.—Lists of students admitted in Lane MSS.

[59]There are numerous papers of this organization in the Lane MSS.

## CHAPTER VII

# *JOHN JAY SHIPHERD*

IT WAS in 1819 that John Jay Shipherd, then but seventeen years old, "determined to lay aside his books and attend to his soul's salvation." He was spending a vacation from Pawlet Academy at the home of his parents in Washington County, New York, when his horse stumbled and threw him. He was unconscious for some time as a result of the fall and, when he came to, determined to seek salvation for fear another accident might precipitate him unprepared into the other world. He returned home and—"For two weeks," as his wife later wrote, "he was under the most pungent convictions of sin, so much so that for two days he shut himself in his room almost in despair. In this state of agony he felt that he must be lost, and yielded himself up to his fate. The Lord mercifully revealed himself to his mind, and he had great peace and joy."[1] From this date Shipherd was never without a deep consciousness of sin. In a letter written to his brother in the same year he speaks of the debt of gratitude he owes to his parents, "which might be paid did I but possess a right heart. Oh! that I possessed it and was grateful to my parents and my God for the innumerable blessings which I have enjoyed and am still enjoying; but alas! my wicked and deceitful heart will not permit; gratitude cannot flow from a heart so vile as myne; no, she is too pure, there is no mansion fit for her habitation."[2] When he returned to school he had definitely decided to prepare for the ministry. "He set his standard high and resolved on a finished education. His ambition prompted him to become no ordinary scholar; his logic was, the more he knew the more good he could do, if sanctified."[3]

[1][Esther Shipherd], "A Sketch of the Life and Labors of John J. Shipherd" (MS in Oberlin College Library), and Fayette Shipherd's MS Journal (really an autobiography) in the Shipherd MSS.

[2]John J. Shipherd to Fayette Shipherd, Cambridge, N. Y., Nov. 28, 1819 (Shipherd MSS).

[3]Esther Shipherd, *Op. Cit.*

Zebulon Rudd Shipherd, his father, was a distinguished lawyer and Federalist politician. Educated at Bennington Academy and in a private law office, he served as a member of Congress from March, 1813, to March, 1815, and was for many years (1819–1841) a trustee of Middlebury College.[4] After his marriage to Betsy Bull, a cultured, high-spirited woman, he built a fine mansion on the single, broad, shady street of Fairvale, just outside of Granville, N. Y., his birthplace, where they lived until their removal to Moriah, N. Y., in 1830. It was at Fairvale that the children were born: Fayette, Minnie, John Jay, and James K., the youngest.[5] It appears that the lawyer engaged in farming on the side, for John Jay wrote in his earliest known letter, addressed to Fayette; "We are farming on a larger scale than usual and we are building a farm house. Father has been absent nearly three weeks and will probably be absent two weeks more. On account of his absence all the business, both of farming and building, devolves on me."[6] The Shipherds were, in the early years, generally prosperous; for a while they owned Negro slaves. In 1835 John Jay wrote in a letter to the trustees of Oberlin: "I was brot up with blacks & slaves & would choke with thirst before I would drink from the same cup with them: but God has shown me that it was an *unholy pride* & *sinful prejudice* which I dare not cherish longer through fear of his displeasure."[7] Zebulon later came to rue his slaveholding days and was generally known as a liberal, an enthusiastic follower and friend of Charles G. Finney and attorney for Gerrit Smith, the philanthropist reformer of Peterboro, N. Y.[8]

Soon after his conversion John Jay Shipherd left Pawlet Academy at Pawlet, Vermont, and spent the next two years at the nearby academy at Cambridge, N. Y. He was making his preparations

[4]Ansel Wold, Ed., *Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774–1927* (Washington—1928).

[5]John Jay Shipherd was born at one in the afternoon, Mar. 28, 1802 (Fayette Shipherd's "Journal").

[6]J. J. S. to Fayette Shipherd, June 18, 1819 (Shipherd MSS).

[7]J. J. S. to the trustees of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute, Jan. 19, 1835 (Misc. Archives).

[8]Zebulon R. Shipherd to Charles G. Finney, Feb. 20, 1827; Dec. 24, 1827; and Mar. 27 1828 (Finney MSS) and C. G. Finney *Memoirs of* . . . (N. Y.–1876), 230. The name of the family was spelled in various ways: Zebulon's father was Samuel Shipherd or Shepherd. His uncles spelled their names variously: Shippard, Shepherd and Sheppard. Samuel's father, Zebulon's grandfather, spelled his name Shepard.—Fayette Shipherd's "Journal." Zebulon R. Shipherd's bill for professional services to Gerrit Smith, 1836, is in the Gerrit Smith MSS.

to enter Middlebury College when one evening in February, 1822, "feeling somewhat indisposed, he proposed to take a dose of epsom salts. He was directed where he could find it in the cupboard, and he, through a mistake, took salt peter.... A doctor was called who administered an emetic, which ejected it from his stomach, accompanied with *such* an alarming quantity of fresh blood, that his friends gathered about him to see him breathe his last."[9] Though he did recover, his eyes were so badly damaged (by the combined effects of overstudy and the poison) that his entrance into college had to be postponed indefinitely. It was hoped that a stay at Saratoga Springs and liberal use of the far-famed waters would restore the full strength of his eyesight. Neither this treatment nor the attention of a famous oculist in New York helped him and thus it became necessary to discover an occupation which would not require much reading.[10]

His father gave up his law practice temporarily and took over a marble factory in order to start his son in a profitable enterprise. It was at this time, when John Jay Shipherd was twenty-two years old, that he married Esther Raymond, five years his senior, of Ballston, New York, and they went to live at Vergennes, Vermont, in the neighborhood of the marble factory.[11] The change in occupation did not in the least reduce his piety, for, in May, 1825, we find him attempting the conversion of his brother James by letter. "Dear James," he wrote, "I would rejoice, and praise God that you have so much encouragment how to come to *Christ* the dear Savior of Sinners, and it is my prayer that you may come quickly before it is forever too late. Oh think dear brother how much you might enjoy, and how much good you might do,—how much misery you might escape and what a blessed portion you might ensure to yourself if you would now repent and believe. Oh let me entreat you as I love you to come to Christ." A letter to Fayette written a year earlier shows him as always more anxious about the things of the spiritual than of the material world. "My attention is quite too much occupied by the business of the

[9]Esther Shipherd, *Op. Cit.* There are two letters written by Shipherd from Cambridge (1818 and 1819) in the Shipherd-Randolph MSS.

[10]There is a letter from J. J. Shipherd, written at Saratoga, July 1, 1822, in the Treas. Off., File H.

[11]Esther Raymond was born in Ballston Spa, Sept. 10, 1797, the daughter of Elijah and Jane (Bradley) Raymond (Record of Membership of the First Presbyterian Church of Elyria, 1824–1899, MS). Also Clarence E. Raymond (great nephew) to author, Nov. 12, 1931.

Factory—more so I hope than it will be when we get through building our machinery. My mind must now necessarily be employed in planning machinery etc. and cannot be employed at the same time in serious contemplation. I have reason to fear that through strict attention to my business which requires the closest attention *now,* I shall neglect my soul & my Savior. . . . We have an interesting Sabbath School, 60 or 70 scholars, about 20 of them are French children."[12] In Vergennes, Mrs. Shipherd afterwards wrote, though he "received the attentions of both old and young, and was invited to join in the amusements of the youth," nevertheless "he took a decided stand, and threw his influence upon the cause of Christ and the Church." His interest in Sunday Schools seems to have been first expressed in active work while at Vergennes. The marble factory was a total failure as was a later venture in the whetstone business. Shipherd always seems to have been lacking in business acumen.

The collapse of these enterprises and the tragic death of his daughter, Jane Elizabeth, turned his mind again to the ministry, despite his physical disability. Early in the spring of 1826 he wrote to his brother of his "Call:"

"I need your counsel and your prayers. Since I last wrote you by mail I have felt an increased and increasing desire to *Preach the Gospel.* I have thought of it much and have made it a subject of prayer and sollem meditation. At first it seemed impossible, my heart, my whole life, my ignorance, and my *eyes,* forbade it, and yet I could not rest. *'Go preach my Gospel'* was reiterated in my mind, and has continued to echo there till I can scarcely dwell upon another subject. The redemption of the soul has indeed appeared *precious* to me, and the service of my *Master Jesus* more delightful than before. Oh that I might be accounted worthy to be his minister! And can it be? Does *my master* bid me go? Did I know it was *his* voice that sweetly whispers, *'preach my gospel',* Gladly & Quickly would I arise, contend with all the obstacles which indeed appear like mountains, and through his strength surmount them all."[13] Shipherd answered his own question in the affirmative. Perhaps his mind was already made up at the time.

[12]J. J. S. to James, May 28, 1825 (Treas. Off., File H), and to Fayette, May 31, 1824 (Shipherd MSS).

[13]J. J. S. to Fayette, Apr. 24, 1826 (Shipherd MSS). The death of his daughter is reported in J. J. S. to Fayette, Oct. 15, 1825 (Shipherd-Randolph MSS).

Esther Raymond Shipherd went back to her parents' home in order to leave John Jay free to join the household of the Reverend Josiah Hopkins, author of the widely-used textbook the *Christian Instructer,* and later of Auburn, but then of New Haven, Vermont. In his new work Shipherd seems to have gotten along generally well, hiring another student to read to him and taking his notes in shorthand. His period of study was brief. "After one year and a half, his teacher sent him out with a few written sermons to commence with." He was not at all confident of his ability to preach and determined to spend his efforts for the most part in the founding of Sunday Schools.

At the first town he visited, however—Shelburne, Vermont—they were lacking a minister. He preached his supply of ready-made sermons with apparent success and then went on to some of his own devising. Upon the urgent request of the Shelburne congregation he decided to remain for a year and sent for Esther and the son, Henry Zebulon, who had been born to them in the meantime. In the autumn of 1827 he wrote optimistically to his father:

"Doubtless you feel a deep solicitude for my success in the great work which I have undertaken. Strange indeed would it be if you were not solicitous; knowing the nature of the service & my imbecility. . . . Your desire is, doubtless, that I should be useful, rather than honorable in the sight of the world; & believing as you do, that success in the Ministry of reconciliation, does not depend upon the armour, which colleges & Theological Seminaries furnish, but upon the *sling & stone;* you will not utterly despair of my usefulness. The want of education I deeply feel, & present embarrassment through the weakness of my eyes—but notwithstanding all these imbecilities, I have to rejoice & bless God, that I am enabled to get along so well.

"Through the Grace of God given me, I am enabled to preach in such a manner as to secure the attendance of a more numerous congregation than they are want to have in this wicked place. And altho the truth which I preach has not become like a 'two-edged Sword' (as I ardently desire that it may) it seems to make a more than usual impression upon the minds of a few. My hopes of a *revival* here, have been considerably raised, but there seems to be everything here calculated to stagger my faith. Episcopacy deals out its opiates profusely. Infidelity pours forth its deathful

waters in desolating torrents & Satan has come also into our little church, raising up an Achan in our Camp.

"But notwithstanding all these obstacles, in God will I hope, and in his name 'preach the word' & 'preach it faithfully', if by any means I may save some & clear myself of the blood of all men. I was Ordained as an Evangelist, on the 17th ult. in this place. It was a most solemnly interesting day to me & favorably impressed my people. I should have been highly gratified could you & Ma have been here. . . . We are comfortably settled, when will you & Ma & friends come & see us? Your visits & letters will lay us under new obligations to love & bless you. Young Zebulon thrives well—Says *Tittie, Kittie,* Pa & Ma & doubtless he is 'friendly' to G. Pa & G. Ma."[14]

Family ties were close among the Shipherds. Associations with parents, brothers, wife and children, we are led to believe, were of the greatest importance to the sensitive nature of John Jay. It is seldom that he omitted in his letters to say something about the children. His interest in his brother James's spiritual salvation, though partly explained by his general piety, appears also as an expression of his fraternal affection. In the spring of 1828 he wrote to him:

"You are my br. dear to my heart, & being denied the pleasure of personal intercourse, it is highly gratifying to enjoy scriptual intercourse. . . . The present, dear br., is a most interesting & critical period of your life, for you are now forming a character for time & eternity. How do you feel with regard to the future? And why do you wish to obtain a finished education? to get rich? to be crowned with the laurels of honor? or to do good? Oh for an assurance that it is for the latter purpose—to do good to your fellow beings & to glorify God, for if it be for either of the former I fear it will prove a curse instead of a blessing. Do you not feel a desire to spend your life in doing good? You have tallents, & education, which you may improve so as to do much good should your life be spared. My br., it is a luxury to do good. & my frequent prayer is that you may enjoy it. Will you not without delay give up your heart to God, & consecrate yourself to his service,

[14]J. J. S. to Z. R. Shipherd, Nov. 9, 1827 (Treas. Off., File H). He wrote to Fayette in a similar vein on the same date (Shipherd MSS). There is a report of the ordination service in the *Vermont Chronicle,* Nov. 2, 1827. Josiah Hopkins, his teacher, preached the ordination sermon.

which is pleasant, the wages of which is durable riches? O my Br. I pray you do it, serve not him whose wages is death, eternal death."[15]

John Jay Shipherd saw no good in learning for learning's sake. Learning was only of service as the handmaid of religion and true religion was expressed in action—in doing good. This was the theory which was to dominate that "Collegiate Institute" which he later founded and there was much of Finney's point of view in it.

As early as 1826 young Shipherd had heard Finney preach and, though he declared that he did not like his "impudence and asperity of manner," nevertheless, he was deeply impressed by his "holy ardor of soul" and "Paul-like boldness." In December of 1827 he must have found it hard to resist Finney's invitation to come to Stephentown and "preach as candidate for settlement" over the church there built up in Finney's great revival. His father, as a member of Finney's "Holy Band," favored the venture. "What answer could I give?" John Jay asked his brother. "Call truely inviting—do *more good—pay debts.* I asked my *Master* (as I hope) & he said *No.* Leave not that *Little Bark,* without a Pilot, to be broken by the mad billows which incessantly beat against it."[16] He remained in Shelburne where, for a while, he had a young man studying theology with him. " 'Tis profitable to me & for a time (ignorant as I am) I trust will be to him." But he could not fail to feel the urge westward which was already drawing so many thousands. "Where will my *Master* [lead] me?" he wrote. "To the North West Coast?"[17] But the time to go west had not yet come.

His stay in Shelburne ended with the first year. He had become very much interested in the Sunday School movement and had done much work in aid of such schools for several years, and concluded to devote himself exclusively to it. In the autumn of 1828 he was appointed General Agent of the Vermont Sabbath School Union.[18] Through the next two years he labored in

[15]J. J. S. to James K. Shipherd, Apr. 6, 1828 (Treas. Off., File H).
[16]J. J. S. to Fayette Shipherd, Dec. 25, 1826, and Dec. 23, 1827 (Shipherd MSS).
[17]J. J. S. to Fayette, Mar. 17, 1828 (Shipherd MSS).
[18]It was Shipherd, himself, who had proposed the establishment of a permanent agency at the meeting of the Vermont Sabbath School Union in September, 1828.—*American Sunday School Magazine,* V., 308 (Oct., 1828), and the *Vermont Chronicle,* Sept. 19, 1828. There is an account of Shipherd's appointment as General Agent in *Ibid.,* Nov. 21, 1828.

THE SABBATH SCHOOL

GUIDE;

OR,

A SELECTION OF INTERESTING AND PROFITABLE SCRIPTURE LESSONS, ILLUSTRATED AND APPLIED, BY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS. DESIGNED AS A PERMANENT SYSTEM OF SABBATH SCHOOL INSTRUCTION.

BY JOHN J. SHIPHERD,
Minister of the Gospel.

[*To be published in semi-annual Numbers.*]

No. X.

"How sweet are thy words unto my taste! *yea, sweeter* than honey to my mouth." Ps. cxix,103.

*BURLINGTON:*
CHAUNCEY GOODRICH.
MDCCCXXVIII.

COVER AND TITLE-PAGE OF SHIPHERD'S *SABBATH SCHOOL GUIDE*
(Original in the Oberlin College Library)

# YOUTH'S HERALD,

AND

SABBATH SCHOOL MAGAZINE.

VOL. I. AUGUST, 1829. NO. 8.

DEATH OF CAROLINE.

She was lovely in her life, and happy in her death.

Our young readers saw in the January Herald, that her early life was lovely and pleasant.

Her attachment to the Sabbath School—her well learned, and deep felt lessons—her strict attention to her teacher's instructions—her tearful eye, which wept, as she heard of Jesus' dying love to sinners; her sorrow for sin, and hatred of it—her love to the Bible, to Prayer, and to the souls of her little mates—her obedience and love to her parents, and to God; were all pleasant and lovely. But alas! lovely as that life was, Death has closed it, forever. On the 25th of June, Caroline Frances White, fell asleep in Jesus, at Plattsburgh, N. Y., aged 15 years.

She was born in Granville, New-York, where she lived about twelve years: nine of which, we





or old, rich or poor,—be willing to do it. Do not think in your hearts, it is too much trouble, or I am better or richer than you are, or how would it look for me to be waiting on such as you. O, my dear children! are you better or richer than the Lord Jesus? will it be more trouble than it was to him to wait on his disciples? Perhaps you think you are not proud; but if the Lord Jesus had been as proud as you are, he never would have died to save us, and we must all have gone away with the wicked forever. A MOTHER.

PLEASURE CHARMS TO DESTROY.

*Mr. Shipherd,*—I want to say to the readers of your excellent little Herald, a few words about the "pleasures of sin." I ask the privilege to do so, because these pleasures are deceitful, short-lived, wicked and ruinous. They act like the charm of a serpent. Snakes hide their bodies, sometimes, in the grass, and lift their heads to look around them. If they chance to see a bird, they fasten their eyes upon it: and so bewitching is their look, that if the bird does but catch it, he is charmed at once. The bird, immediately flutters and flies about, as if wounded or frightened, and

TWO PAGES FROM SHIPHERD'S SUNDAY SCHOOL MAGAZINE

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this field, making his headquarters at Middlebury, where his wife helped to support the family by taking over the boarding department of the female seminary. One of the fruits of his activity in this department was a handbook for Sunday School teachers. The little booklet, containing 58 pages, was published in 1828 as *The Sabbath School Guide, No. 1.* In 1831 it was revised and reissued as an official publication of the Vermont Sabbath School Union.[19] He also published the *Youth's Herald* monthly throughout 1829 and 1830. This tiny magazine (about 3x5 inches) was intended also primarily for use in Sabbath Schools. In the first issue the editor stated that he intended to furnish "simple, interesting and profitable" reading for children and "an important aid to parents and guardians, in training up their children, in the way they should go."[20]

Of course, the issuance of publications was only a part of the agent's work, most of his time being taken up with visiting schools, establishing new ones, and founding county Sabbath School libraries.[21] Shipherd's conception of his agency is stated editorially in a later issue of the *Herald*:

"Now, this Agent feels that he has a *great* and *good* work to perform. He has a whole *State* for a parish, and many thousand souls to look after. The dear lambs of his numerous flock are scattered all over the mountains and through the valleys; and the Bible says, the Devil, as a roaring Lion, goes about to destroy them. This Agent loves these lambs, and cannot bear the thought of having them destroyed by the roaring Lion. He thinks, if they could all be sheltered in *good* Sabbath Schools; that the Lion would not find it easy to catch them; and he knows, that if they

[19]*The Sabbath School Guide; or a Skeleton of Interesting and Profitable Scripture Lessons, Selected and Applied by Questions and Answers. Designed as a Permanent System of Sabbath School Instruction, No. 1.*—To be published in semi-annual Numbers "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth." Ps. CXIX, 103 (Burlington; Chauncey Goodrich, 1828). He discussed the book in a letter to Fayette, May 14, 1828 (Shipherd MSS), and another, July 22, 1828 (Shipherd-Randolph MSS). These letters and an advertisement in the *Vermont Chronicle* (July 3, 1828) make it clear that the first edition of the *Guide* was issued before Shipherd was officially appointed General Agent.

[20]*Youth's Herald and Sabbath School Magazine,* Middlebury, Vt.—By the Vermont Sabbath School Union. The American Antiquarian Society at Worcester, Mass. has Jan., Feb., Mar., Apr., May, June, July, Aug., Sept., and Oct., 1829, and May, Oct., Nov. and Dec., 1830.

[21]That Shipherd was a really active agent is apparent from various reports in the *Vermont Chronicle,* Apr. 3, May 8, June 27, Sept. 18, 1829; Jan. 1, Feb. 26, 1830, etc.

could be brought into the arms of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, they would be safe. Now, for the love which he bears these tender lambs, he begs the christians to pray, that he may be a *good shepherd,* and instrumental of saving them from destruction. He begs also, that Ministers, Parents and Guardians, Superintendents and Teachers, and all others, will do what they can to bring them into the fold of the Sabbath School, and into the fold of Jesus Christ. Let no one wait for the coming of the Shepherd; for though he intends to visit his whole flock as soon as he can; much time must pass away, before he can see them all.

"Up, then, all you who care for souls, and labor with all your might, to save these tender ones from the Devourer. And dear lambs! fly you to the Sabbath School, and to the Great and Good Shepherd, Jesus; and may he fold you in his arms, and carry you in his bosom."[22]

Probably partly in recognition of this work, Shipherd (in company with his brother Fayette and Noah Webster, who had just published his *Unabridged Dictionary)* was granted an honorary degree by Middlebury College at the 1830 Commencement.[23] Absalom Peters' periodical, the *Home Missionary and Pastor's Journal,* seems to have been the deciding factor in sending him forth into the "unplowed spiritual fields" of the New West.[24] Besides, less than half of his $500.00 salary as agent had been paid. In his letter of resignation he wrote that most people seemed to expect "God to rain manna from heaven upon his family, or send the ravens to feed them."[25] In the last issue of his *Youth's Herald* appears the farewell to his "Young Readers":

"The time has come when he who has spoken to you through the Youth's Herald, will speak to you no more. For two years has the Editor of this little messenger striven to send to you interesting and profitable truth. Unless you, dear readers, are benefited, he has no reward for his labors; for he has not yet received the actual cost of publishing. His aim has been to do

[22] *Youth's Herald,* Mar. 1829. (Neither the author nor Shipherd makes any apology for the pun.) In the spring of 1830 Shipherd reported 14,000 scholars in 300 Sabbath Schools in Vermont.—American S. S. Union, *Sixth Annual Report* (Philadelphia—1830), 39–40

[23] Zadock, Thompson, *History of Vermont, Natural, Civil and Statistical,* etc. (Burlington—1842), 159.

[24] J. J. S. to Fayette Shipherd, Apr. 7, 1829 (Shipherd MSS).

[25] *Vermont Chronicle,* July 30, 1830.

you good. Have you been profited? If you have not, is the fault yours or the Editor's? He must soon answer to God for the manner in which you have received instruction. And now, dear readers, as the Editor has no more to say to you, will you not look over what he has said, and mind that which is good? Little as the Herald is, if you will follow its instructions, it will prove to you a *herald of salvation.*

"I am pained to part with you, my little friends; but I must go to a distant land, and try to do good to others. May God in mercy, send you, the dear lambs of my flock, a more faithful *Shepherd;* and may you so repent, and believe, and obey the Gospel, that the great and good Shepherd will receive you into his arms."[26]

By the date of the publication of this issue of his little magazine he was already in "a distant land." His momentous decision had been made in the spring of 1830, and in May he wrote of it to his parents: "As it now seems to me the finger of Providence points *westward* even to Mississippi's vast valley, which is fast filling up with bones which are dry; & the Spirit that giveth life is not wont to breathe upon them, till the prophet's voice be uttered. Who shall utter it? As if affrighted at the sight, many who, I think, ought to go, stand back. The cultivated field of New England & the Middle States is more inviting than the new & desolate region of the West; & has a multitude of laborers in it compared with that valley of moral death. The Lord of the harvest says 'Whom shall I send, & who will go for us?' The heart of your unworthy son responds: 'Here am I send me'."[27] From this time on, John Jay Shipherd's life was devoted to the salvation of the Great Western Valley.

* * *

The Shipherd family, now including two sons, and joined by Elmira Collins, a schoolteacher friend, boarded the canal boat near Schenectady for the journey into the Godless wilderness at one o'clock in the afternoon, Tuesday, September 28, 1830. Four days later on Saturday afternoon, October 2, they arrived at Rochester. This was either well planned or a fortunate coincidence, for it allowed them to stay in that town over the

[26] *Youth's Herald,* Dec., 1830.
[27] J. J. S. to Z. R. Shipherd, May 11, 1830 (Treas. Off., File H).

week-end and thus escape breaking the Sabbath and also hear Finney who was then conducting his first great Rochester revival. Finney tried to persuade Shipherd to stay and help him; Shipherd tried to persuade Finney to go west. But they parted with mutual benedictions, Finney to stay in New York and continue his revivals and Shipherd to carry out his mission to the "desolate valley." Neither could have guessed the association which the future (which both would have considered providential) held for them. "I was at the Second Church," Shipherd wrote to his brother, "where I preached in the afternoon. I heard Br. Finney in the evening, & had some agreeable private intercourse with him. The work of God there seems to move on with power. Br. F. was very desirous that I should stop & labor with him, saying that he never needed me so much; but anxious as I was to stop, my Lord & Master seemed to bid me depart, saying that his work for me was in this land farther west."[28]

The little party again took up their journey at one o'clock Monday morning, and reached Buffalo on Tuesday. Having improved the opportunity to see the "sweetly blended . . . grandeur and beauty" of Niagara Falls they boarded the Steamboat *Henry Clay* at nine o'clock Wednesday morning. Though Miss Collins, Mrs. Shipherd and the boys, along with most of the crowd of three hundred passengers, were intensely seasick, they landed safely early on Thursday at Cleveland, then a village of about a thousand souls. The next day Shipherd received news of a vacancy at the frontier settlement of Elyria in Lorain County some twenty-odd miles farther west. On Saturday he arrived in that village with his family and their companion. On Sunday, October 10, he supplied the pulpit of the First Presbyterian Church of Elyria, a religious society of but 30 members.

A letter written to his brother, James, then a student in Middlebury, about a month after their arrival in Elyria shows the young evangelist-missionary as always with a single eye to the salvation of souls, including his own brother's:

"Dearly Beloved Brother. . . . Our journey was far more pleasant than we anticipated. The stream of God's mercy rolled along our pathway, nearly 700 miles long, ever fresh and cheering. 'Tis pleasant to dwell upon that journey altho' it was *from loved*

[28]J. J. S. to Fayette Shipherd, Oct. 15, 1830 (Shipherd MSS). There is also a reference to the Rochester visit in J. J. S. to Finney, Mar. 14, 1831 (Finney MSS).

*ones,* for it was ordered by the Lord in kindness. Think not however that all was pleasant. Your fond heart knows too well the pangs of separation to believe it could be. 'The fondness of a creature's love,' 'How strong it strikes the sense!' 'Thither the warm affections move,' 'Nor can we call them thence.'[29] However pleasant we passed along, we were receding from loved Parents, Brothers, Sisters & other kindred near & dear, & friends we loved; & those curious cords which bound us to them, thus strained, produced an aching of the heart. Oh brother, I shall not forget Rutland when I said to you farewell. . . . When I said farewell to others, I hoped if we did not meet again on earth, when life's toil was done to meet in heaven, & part no more forever; & this hope as a kind heavenly ray chased sorrow's darkness from the soul: But ah my brother! no such ray cheered the spirit when I said farewell to you; and for want of it sorrow filled my heart. . . . The thot of your continuance in sin is too disturbing for endurance. You have tallents to do good; it is your duty to do good; & my soul desires that you may enjoy the luxury thereof. I desire not simply your salvation, but that you may be the means of saving others, & thus of honoring God. . . . O my beloved brother, I tremble for you in view of a bare possibility that you may be lost; for if you should be cast with the unprofitable servant into outer darkness yours would be a tenfold condemnation; for you would sink in hell forever under the instructions, & admonitions, & entreaties, & prayers of many anxious friends. . . . Brother Fayette, in a letter this day received, speaking of the mortality of Middlebury, says 'If brother James should die in his present state, *how awful*!' The very thot struck my soul with a death chill. O brother! Dear brother, you must now give your heart to God!

"Whether I locate in this place will not be known till about the first of Jan. & about the event I have no anxiety. I feel that I am now doing my Master's work, & am willing to continue it here or elsewhere as he shall direct. I never labored in his good services more cheerfully, & I hope that my labor, however poor, will not be in vain in the Lord."[30]

[29]Quotations from the Missionary Hymn—"Yes, My Native Land I Love Thee."

[30]J. J. S. to James K. Shipherd, Nov. 8, 1830 (Treas. Off., File H). James died at Thetford, Feb. 17, 1834, aged 24 years. "When asked if he did not desire to see a brother in Ohio, he replied yes; but we shall meet in heaven."—*Vermont Chronicle,* May 9, 1834.

## CHAPTER VIII

# *ELYRIA*

CONNECTICUT'S Western Reserve on the southern shore of Lake Erie was a wilderness when Kentucky became a state. Except for a few scattered settlements in the eastern portion at Tallmadge, Austinburg, Hudson, Painesville, etc. this was still true when Ohio entered the Union in 1803. Indeed the area beyond the Cuyahoga was Indian country until 1805. While the Southern uplanders and Pennsylvanians were settling in Kentucky, Tennessee, southern Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, the Yankees were occupying the valley farms of western New York and pushing slowly along the lake shore into the extreme northeastern area of Ohio, where Cleveland was founded at the mouth of the Cuyahoga in the last years of the eighteenth century.

In the first decade of the new century a few New England farmers drove their ox-carts west of Cleveland, and occasional tiny clearings appeared to break the gloom of the virgin forest shade. Progress in the occupation of the Lorain County area was slow, however, until well after the War of 1812 when the Indian menace was at last dispelled. The Beebes, from Vermont, appeared on the lake front near the mouth of Black River and on the ridges (lake fronts of former geologic ages), and the Burrells, of Berkshire County, Massachusetts, settled nearby in what later became Sheffield Township. Scattered farms were purchased from the Connecticut proprietors in Amherst Township from 1810 through 1817 but not until Josiah Harris settled at North Amherst and Harry and Eliphalet Redington at (South) Amherst in 1818 could the place be said to have been "founded." In the previous year log buildings had been put up at Elyria at the forks of the Black River by Heman Ely, and in 1820 Artemas Beebe erected a tavern there (a frame building torn down in 1942). In 1818, 1819 and 1820 the Penfields arrived to open up the township later named after them. In 1817

and 1818 Colonel Henry Brown, of Stockbridge, Massachusetts, led a colony of his neighbors to establish the settlement at Brownhelm, among them Peter Pindar Pease, Grandison Fairchild and Alva Curtis, an uncle of Mark Hopkins. The Fairchilds, with their three little sons, Charles Grandison, Edward Henry, and James Harris (only a year old), drove their wagon through central New York to Buffalo where they took passage on Lake Erie's newly-launched first steamboat, the *Walk-in-the-Water,* to Cleveland. From Cleveland they continued the journey with a team by a route through the forest that could hardly be flattered by the name of road. The first houses were, of course, log cabins, sometimes without chimneys, doors or floors and even without "chinking" between the logs. By the fall of 1818, however, Mrs. Curtis could write: "Here is now and then a rustic dwelling in a field of wheat newly sown and springing up fresh and green. The tinkling of bells are heard around and even the crowing of cocks at our neighbors' doors; health is in our habitation and a pleasing prospect before us of the latter harvest."[1]

One of the last parts of the county to be opened up was a swampy area known as Township 6 North of Range 19 West of the Western Reserve, but later called Russia Township, containing the future site of Oberlin. In 1818 a few clearings were opened in its northern part adjacent to the Amherst settlement and a short distance from the main east-west, mail-stage road (Route 113) which connected Elyria with Maumee and ran through the southern part of the present Amherst township. Russia Township was regularly organized in 1825, and in 1829

[1]Letters of the Curtis family in the *Early Letters of Mark Hopkins* (New York—[c. 1929]), 35–43. The Fairchild story is told in some detail in James Harris Fairchild, *Grandfather's Story* (Oberlin—c. 1906), which is quoted extensively in A. T. Swing, *James Harris Fairchild* (New York—c. 1907). There is much data on early settlement in G. Frederick Wright, *Standard History of Lorain County, Ohio* (Chicago and New York–1916), 75 *et seq.* On Pease see Rev. David Pease, *Genealogical and Historical Record of the Descendants of John Pease of Enfield, Conn.* (Springfield, Mass.—1869), I, 196–198, also obituary in *Oberlin Evangelist,* Nov. 20, 1861. On Amherst see Robert Grenville Armstrong, *Amherst's Story* (n.p.—1914), pages 16–17 and 31–32. J. H. Fairchild, *Early Settlement and History of Brownhelm* (Oberlin–1867) should be recognized as a classic description of frontier life on the Reserve. When, late in August, 1818, the *Walk-in-the-Water* reached Cleveland, the *Cleveland Gazette* reported: "The elegant Steam Boat, WALK-IN-THE-WATER, Capt. Fish, from Buffalo, arrived," and there was a salute of artillery. (*Annals of Cleveland—Cleveland Gazette,* Sept. 1, 1818).

there were 21 votes at the election.[2] Most of these early settlers were in the Amherst vicinity, however, the south central portion where Oberlin was later established being almost unbroken forest until 1833. Before the latter date a road had been opened through it from north to south, running from the mouth of the Black River on Lake Erie to Wellington—the present Ohio Route 58. None of the maps show it, but there appears to have been some sort of a track from Elyria west to the Oberlin site along the Route 10 and Lorain Street of today.

In 1822 Lorain County was formally organized and two years later Elyria was made the county seat. By 1830 that village had a population of between six and seven hundred people and boasted several stores, two mills, blacksmith shops, an iron foundry, two taverns, a classical school, and a newspaper, the *Ohio Atlas and Elyria Gazette*.[3]

Missionary pastors of the Congregational-Presbyterian Plan-of-Union persuasion early appeared among these later Pilgrims. Joseph Badger was the pioneer of the New England missionaries on the Reserve, founding the Austinburg church in 1801. There he was succeeded in 1810 by the Rev. Giles H. Cowles, who in 1830 gave place to Henry Cowles.[4] All three were Yale men as were many of the early Ohio ministers. Henry graduated from college in 1826 and from the Yale Theological Seminary in 1828. At Yale he and his brother and classmate John P. Cowles were associated with the famous Illinois Band (Flavel Bascom, Theron Baldwin, etc.), and as late as 1829 he was still planning to join them.[5] He preached from late 1828 to early 1830 in Ashtabula and Sandusky and then went East to make Alice Welch his bride, returning soon after to Austinburg.[6] Stephen Peet and Joseph A. Pepoon had both been students at Auburn Seminary when Finney's great revivals were in progress. Peet

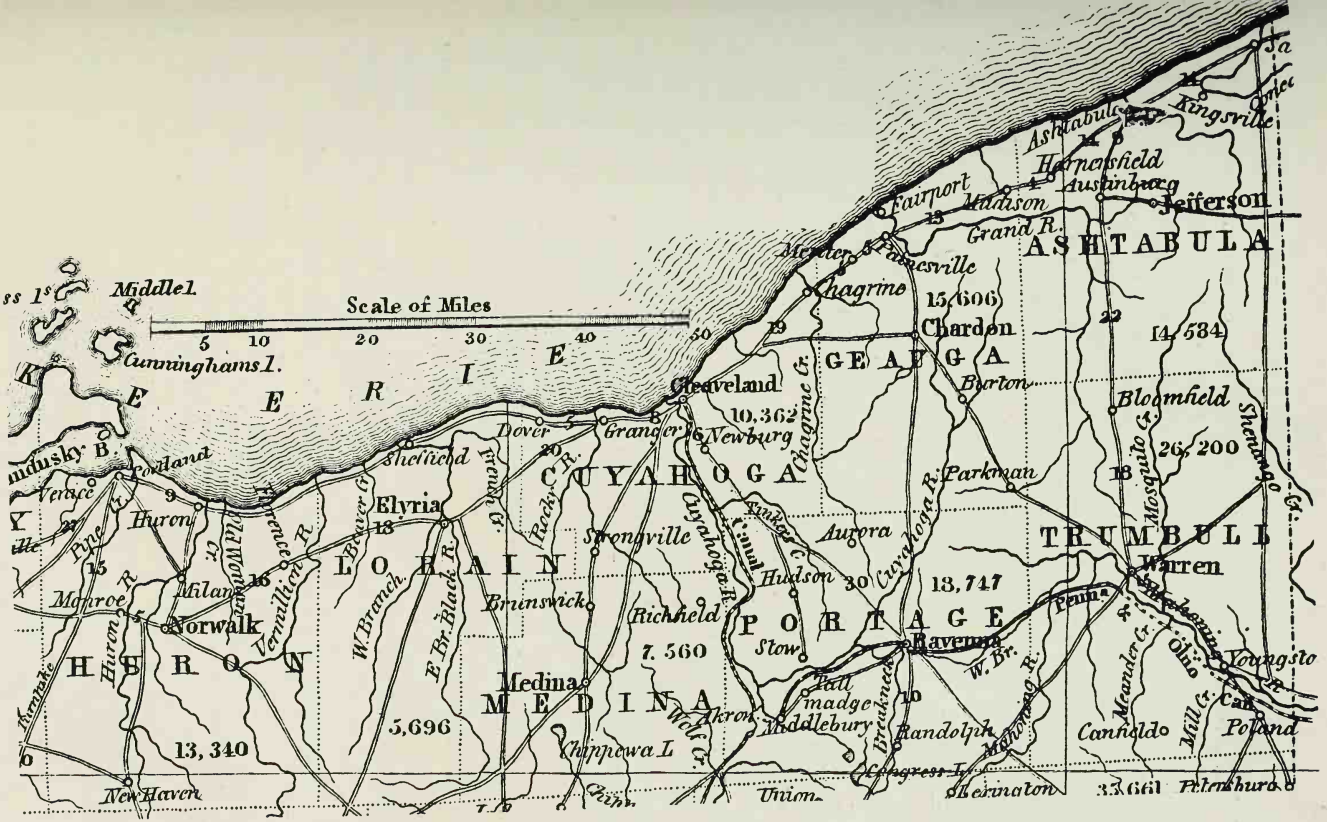
[2]Memorandum by John L. Hunter in the Russia Township, MS Records, 1855–1869 (Oberlin College Library).

[3]On Elyria see A. R. Webber, *Early History of Elyria and Her People* (Elyria—1930), *passim*. Later the *Ohio Atlas and Elyria Advertiser*.

[4]Mrs. A. O. Fuller, "Early Annals of the Austinburg Church," Ohio Church History Society, *Papers*, X (Oberlin—1899), 63–79.

[5]J. H. Fairchild, "Rev. Henry Cowles, D.D.," *In Memoriam, Rev. Henry Cowles, D.D.* (Oberlin—1883); *Vermont Chronicle*, Feb. 22, 1828, and Henry Cowles to Absalom Peters, Aug. 21, 1829 (A. H. M. S. MSS).

[6]He was ordained at Hartford, July 1, 1828 (American Educ. Soc., *Quarterly Register*, I, 135 [Oct., 1828]) and was not formally installed at Austinburg until Aug. 29, 1832 (*Ibid.*, V. 160 [Nov., 1932]).




THE WESTERN RESERVE IN 1837

Oberlin was at about the "O" in LORAIN.

(Reproduced from the Map of Ohio in Warren Jenkins, *The Ohio Gazetteer and Traveler's Guide* [Columbus—1837])

came to preach in Euclid, just east of Cleveland, in 1826; Pepoon came to Mantua in the same year and later preached in various towns in the region.[7] Dr. Alfred H. Betts, physician as well as minister, came to the church in Brownhelm in 1820, preaching there and in surrounding communities for many years thereafter.[8] In 1828 he was joined by his brother Xenophon Betts, who in 1829 was installed as pastor at Wakeman, a few miles to the south of Brownhelm and west of the present Oberlin.[9] In 1826, Frederick Hamlin, the postmaster at Wellington (nine miles south of Oberlin), wrote to the American Home Missionary Society asking that a minister be provided for that community. David Smith was sent in reply to this request and he was succeeded in 1828 by Joel Talcott, a graduate of Yale and the Auburn Seminary.[10]

The Western Reserve had its own Domestic Missionary Society which met in its first regular session on September 28, 1826, at Aurora "at the rising of the Sun." Giles Cowles was elected first president.[11] This society was at first associated with the Board of Missions of the Presbyterian Church, but in 1830 it became an auxiliary of the American Home Missionary Society. At the same time the Rev. Daniel W. Lathrop, minister in Elyria, was appointed agent for the organization. A few weeks later he wrote to Peters, the secretary of the national society, calling for thirty more missionaries for the Reserve. This was in April; in June Lathrop spoke at the anniversary of the American Sunday School Union in New York City, presenting the needs of the Valley of the Mississippi for Sabbath School workers and ministers. About a month later Shipherd resigned as agent of the Vermont Sabbath School Union to answer the call.[12]

The Yankee missionaries planned schools, too, to supplement

[7]Auburn Seminary, *General Biographical Catalogue,* 23 and 26.

[8]J. H. Fairchild, *History of the Congregational Church of Brownhelm* (Oberlin—1895). *Cf.* his description of religion in the "Fire Lands"—*Western Recorder,* Nov. 15, 1825. There is an interesting sketch of Alfred H. Betts in R. Braden Moore, *History of Huron Presbytery* (Philadelphia—1892), 50–54.

[9]X. Betts to A. Peters, Jan. 28, and Apr. 19, 1829 (A. H. M. S. MSS).

[10]Hamlin to Peters, Apr. 17, 1826; Smith to Peters, June 27, 1826 (A. H. M. S. MSS); Auburn Seminary, *General Biographical Catalogue* 34, and W. E. Barton, "History of the First Congregational Church of Wellington, Ohio," Ohio Church History Society, *Papers,* II, 21–55 (Oberlin—1892).

[11]W. R. Domestic Miss. Soc., MS Minutes, Sept. 27 and 28, 1826.

[12]*Ibid,* Sept. 26, 1827, and Mar. 3, 1830; Lathrop to Peters, Apr. 23, 1830 (A. H. M. S. MSS), and *Vermont Chronicle,* June 18, 1830.

the work of the churches. Western Reserve College was founded at Hudson in 1826. Charles B. Storrs, a graduate of Andover, became one of the first professors and President in 1831. Rev. Beriah Green left his church at Brandon, Vermont, to join him on the faculty in 1829. Green was an old friend and associate of John Jay Shipherd's. He apparently had also studied at Pawlet Academy before going to Middlebury, and had been one of the managers of the Vermont Sabbath School Union when Shipherd was agent of that organization. When Shipherd's brother Fayette was ordained at Pawlet in 1826, Beriah Green led in prayer and delivered the charge to the congregation.[13] Various secondary schools were also established at an early date: the Grand River Institute at Austinburg, a seminary at Brownhelm as early as 1825, the Huron Institute at Milan—a manual labor school, and the Elyria High School.[14] When this "high school" was opened in 1832 John Jay Shipherd hoped to have his brother, James K. Shipherd, of the Thetford Academy, Vermont, appointed to head it. But instead, John Monteith, formerly of the University of Michigan and Hamilton College, was brought up from Germantown. Monteith supplemented his teaching with some preaching in Elyria, Ridgeville and other nearby points.[15]

Among these missionaries on the Reserve there was probably a majority of new-measures men. In 1831 a friendly evangelist wrote to Finney: "In Ohio I found some men of the right Stamp among whom was President Storrs of Western Reserve College who is a real Fullblooded thorough going Finneyite also J. J. Shipperd of Elyria."[16] Mrs. Finney's brother, P. B. Andrews, wrote to her from the little village of Cleveland, where he was engaged in making steam engines, that their minister was anxious to have Mr. Finney come west.[17] Monteith's relationship to Finney has been developed in a previous chapter. In November of 1830 Stephen Peet invited Finney into his pulpit at Euclid.[18] In

[13] *Vermont Chronicle*, Feb. 2, 1827; Sept. 19, 1828, and Muriel Block, "Beriah Green," 2.

[14] On the school at Brownhelm see Lathrop to Peters, Jan. 20, 1827, and on the Huron Institute: E. Judson to Peters, June 15, 1833 (A. H. M. S. MSS).

[15] J. J. S. to J. K. Shipherd, Feb. 7, 1832 (Shipherd-Randolph MSS); Monteith to Peters, Mar. 20, 1833 (A. H. M. S. MSS), and Western Reserve Domestic Miss. Soc., MS Minutes, Aug. 1 and 27, 1833.

[16] James Boyle to Finney, Nov. 30, 1831 (Finney MSS).

[17] P. B. Andrews to Mr. Finney, Feb. 14, 1830 (Finney MSS).

[18] Stephen Peet to Finney, Nov. 15, 1830 (Finney MSS).

the following February thirteen ministers and laymen of the Grand River Presbytery (Austinburg, Painesville, Geneva and vicinity) united in requesting Finney to visit them "as soon as you can consistently with your other duties," praying that God might "in his mercy make you instrumental in quickening his people, & in saving sinners from eternal death." The signers included Giles and Henry Cowles, and Joseph Pepoon. A special invitation was sent by the church at Painesville.[19] Finney, of course, did not come—yet. It was to be over four years before New York would lose him to Ohio.

In the spring of 1831, Shipherd wrote home to his parents describing Elyria and the Lorain County environment in considerable detail:

"The first tree was here cut 13 years ago, but the village has been mostly built within six yrs. Its site is a peninsula formed by the two branches of the Black River, which in the widest place are just about one mile apart. At these points the main street crosses the branches, & is pretty thickly settled most of the way. There are numerous other streets laid out, on some of which they have begun to build. The village is now growing rapidly, & the expectation is that it will be large. It is the third town [on the Reserve] & its water privileges for this country are uncommonly good. They are not yet occupied save by a grist mill and sawmills a forge & furnace but probably will be soon. We are 9 miles from the mouth of the river & lake, & 24 from Cleveland. This village has the business of almost the entire County, & some of neighboring Counties. We have an elegant court house which cost 7000 dolls. . . .

"The face of the country is plain, crossed in various directions with sand ridges. From these ridges of light soil you gradually descend to the low grounds, which are clay or heavy loam, too wet for plowing but fine for grass. These lands are heavily timbered with chestnut, oak, white wood, hickory, maple & Beech, ash &c. I have not seen a pine tree in the country. White wood is a good substitute. These lands are sold from 2 to 8 dolls. per acre. They are tolerably well watered. Our well water is very fine.

[19]Giles H. Cowles and others to Finney, Feb. 2, 1831, and William M. Adams to Finney, Feb. 27, 1831 (Finney MSS). A list of Presbyterian ministers in Ohio at this time will be found in the American Education Society, *Quarterly Register*, III, 221–223 (Feb. 1831).

This place is as healthy as your mount., & so is this region generally. The mouths of the streams are comonly sickly. Provisions are abundant usually. More scarce now, altho enough. Wheat from 50 to 75 cts. pr. bush. corn from 20 to 37 cts &c. Merchandise something higher than with you or Middlebury, but coming down. Our climate is something milder than yours. Our people are mostly from Conn. & Mass. or N. Y.

"Our moral condition is deplorable. There are but two Presb. ministers besides myself laboring in this county, & these two have for months been unable to labor. And there is but very little lay help. The pop. of this town is about 700 & of this Co. about 6000, which is rapidly growing. The Co. is very new. The four miles of the town lying north of this village are almost unbroken wilderness. A few families are scattered through it, & wolves enough. Returning from a mission among these families, night overtook me—I lost my way, as I could not see the marked trees or tracks which were covered with leaves—& to comfort me while searching for the road a gang of wolves set up a howling which make the woods ring, but he who delivered David from the mouth of the Lion & bear delivered me also, & led me home safely. Let not Mother be troubled about this; for no one here has ever been injured by the wolves. Wolfish men are much more to be dreaded; & as I was saying, we who have to oppose them & labor for their salvation are but very few."[20]

* * *

On February 2, 1831, Shipherd was definitely settled as missionary pastor in Elyria in succession to Lathrop. Beriah Green preached the sermon at his induction. Shipherd found his new duties very exacting for his weak constitution. "I have as many public services to perform as if my congregation was twice as large, & have to prepare for them as carefully. It is seldom that I have a night at home. In the village or out, I hold a meeting nearly every night. I also spend what time other duties will permit in visiting, I being judge. The fact that there are only thirty in the church, to me, is evidence that there is much to do. And remember that this is the most prominent place, Cleveland excepted, in the whole bounds of our Presbytery. O brother there is so much to do, & it is so connected with eternity

[20]J. J. S. to Z. R. Shipherd, Apr. 6, 1831 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

that in view of it I should sink did not my Lord say, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' "[21]

Finding it impossible to rent, the Shipherds built a house of their own where they lived comfortably but frugally for the next two years. "Some of our people are negligent in paying salary, but the God whom we serve sends others with full supplies. We have not wanted any good (temporal) thing." "We are temporate and have been so in drink & food. We eat bread & milk for breakfast & supper & a little pork with vegetables for dinner."[22] For a while the fear of the cholera cast its shadow over them as it did over the whole country. In August, 1832, Shipherd wrote to his parents: "Through the mercy of God we have had no cases of cholera among us yet. Some 8 or 10 have died in Cleveland, & many more west of us. We hope you will not be anxious about us. . . . If after all we should be removed, we trust it will be our Father's hand that will take us." In April of 1831 a third son was born. "Thro' the mercy of God I am permitted to say that at 2 o'clock this morning we recd. another *son,* large & vigorous, weighing nearly *eight* pounds. He is the Lord's. Esther was favored, & is apparently doing well. You will join us in praise to God, & pleading that we may have additional grace to discharge parental obligations. O how great it is!"[23]

Every letter written by John and Esther Shipherd from Elyria contains intimate references to their children: their sayings, their health, or the state of their souls. The letter just quoted continues: "The children, of course, are delighted with their little brother. They say & do many things which would interest their grandparents if they were here. Henry learns much in Infant School & Wm. considerable. Lately H—began to play on the Sabb morn. & Wm. said 'Re-mem-Sabb-day-keep-holy.' H. sometimes weeps saying that he is a sinner. They both talk much of you, & express anxiety (particularly H—) to have you come here." It is not surprising that the latest born (named Edward) should have become the favorite of the family. "Edward continues to be lovely in our estimation. We are happier in him, than, perhaps,

[21]J. J. S. to Fayette Shipherd, Feb. 7, 1831 (Shipherd MSS). The installation was reported in the *Western Recorder,* Mar. 8, 1831, and the American Education Society, *Quarterly Register,* III, 315 (May, 1831).

[22]J. J. S. to Z. R. S. Sept. 3, 1832 (Treas. Off., File H).

[23]J. J. S. to Z. R. Shipherd, Aug. 6, 1832, and Apr. 6, 1831 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

either of our [other] infants. Father made him a swinging cradle, & Grandma wd. be delighted to see him sit upon the edge of it & swing himself to a tune of his own chiming. He is healthy, strong, affectionate, & apparently of good intellectual constitution. Perhaps he is dearer to us because born in a strange land. He runs about the yard and garden makes a multitude of various sounds but does not talk."[24]

Never could Shipherd forget that even these young, tender shoots had immortal souls to be saved. "With all that is estimable in these children of our care, we are grieved that they are children of wrath. We teach them that they are under obligation to repent *now* &, in our poor way, pray that they may *now* turn to God; yet still we want faith. I do believe that our most ardent & constant desire is that our children may be the *servants* of the Lord." Henry seems to have been particularly impressed by these parental efforts for his salvation. "He eats nothing but bread & milk for breakfast & supper, usually; having engaged to forego the butter for a Testament monthly to give to poor children. He has obtained two. He said lately, that if I would give him money to pay the Female Ed. Soc. for heming his pocket handkerchief, he would abstain from butter at dinner also."[25]

Despite the fact that Shipherd felt sure of his selection by God he was often conscious of lack of training and ability to do the work, "imbecility" he usually called it. In December, 1831, he wrote to his parents of "the poor furniture with which I entered the holy ministry—my constant inability to improve it much—."[26] In a letter written to Finney early in the same year he expressed the same feeling of inadequacy:

"I am sorry to occupy your time which thousands want, but can deny myself the privilege of writing you no longer. I rejoice in the Lord's marvelous work in Rochester & the region around about—Also in the villages & cities east of you. The frequent intelligence which I receive from them by means of the N. Y. Evang.st & other periodicals & private communications, revives my drooping spirit in this valley of dry bones. O br. I pant to be with you, & inhale the soul reviving influence which gives life to all around you! I often think how blessed I should have been

[24]J. J. S. to Z. R. Shipherd, Sept. 3, 1832 (Treas. Off., File H).
[25]*Ibid.*
[26]J. J. S. to Z. R. Shipherd, Dec. 1, 1831 (O. C. Lib. Mis. MSS).

could I have remained with you in Rochester. It was my heart's desire to stop with you, but my Master seemed to bid me leave for this region, & still I think it was my duty. Why it is that I have not been permitted to labor with you, that I might learn of you for a season, I know not. I have ardently desired it, hoping that I might thus obtain qualifications for the holy ministry, for which I am now utterly disqualified. But hitherto God has righteously hindered me. Dear br. shall I never be taught of God thro' you? I remember your parting prayer, in which you spoke of my coming as your pioneer, to this valley of death. I have come, as I believe, under our Master's direction to this place, a new & flourishing village 24 miles south west of Cleveland, & have received this people in charge by solemn installation. I have endeavored to preach the word to them in season & out of season, & preach to them repentance & the remission of sins. As a pioneer I have opened the way to a field, than which no one of the same population can be in greater need of your ministry. . . .

"But whether our Lord permits you to come or not, counsel your weak & unworthy br. who is already here desiring to do, but not knowing how. I believe I do not shun to declare the whole counsel of God. I have spoken out the truth in the sanctuary, lecture room & from house to house, fearing no one, favoring no one, at least I have aimed to do so; & yet the people will not repent. Only two in this place to my knowledge have turned to God since I came here. The people are some of them mad at me, & say all manner of evil against me; while others say, 'This is plain truth,' & sleep on in their sins; or at least do not awake to righteousness.

"This is indeed a lamentable state of things. I deplore it, & beg of you to tell me how to produce a better. I do not preach right, I know not how to preach right. O tell me how I may thrust the two edged sword into the sinners inmost soul!"[27]

It is a significant letter also as emphasizing the early association and unity of purpose of two great leaders of Oberlin, and also the reverence and respect with which Shipherd looked upon Finney. Though the great evangelist did not come to the Reserve in response to this summons, the time was soon to be when he would follow his "pioneer."

[27]J. J. S. to Rev. Charles G. Finney, Elyria, Mar. 14, 1831 (Finney MSS).

Perhaps Finney gave Shipherd advice which he could utilize, for in May and June a "new-measures" revival compared to that in Rochester was reported from Elyria. At the first meetings, "the congregation was small & the prospect dark, but God's Holy Spirit descended in such overpowering might that . . . [it] resulted in the hopeful conversion of many souls."[28] A casual visitor to the town during the "excitement" reported: "The streets on Monday appeared like Sabbath day. When I carried my letter to the Post Office, it was with considerable trouble I could get into a store to obtain a wafer to seal it. . . . As was said of Rochester, 'they have more important business.' The influence of this work of the Lord is extending into neighboring towns. It already seems like the scenes exhibited in Rochester, of which we have read. . . . It is the Lord's doings, and marvelous in our eyes, and to Him be all the glory." Shipherd wrote to his brother: "God is truly doing great things for us in the valley. Oh that we had help to gather the rich harvest already whitened around us!"[29] On August 14, though Shipherd was "closely confined to a dark room on account of sore and inflamed eyes," Reverend A. H. Betts of Brownhelm officiated in the reception of fifty-five members into the Elyria church.[30] In 1832 Shipherd was enabled to report to the American Home Missionary Society, by which he was partially supported, that there were 160 students in the Sabbath Schools, that there was a Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society and a Bible and Tract Society and that 63 new members had been received into the church as a result of the revival.[31]

He carried his labors also into surrounding communities. On one occasion he "rode thirty-two miles to attend a two days meeting, and altho' the pastor of that church made a special effort to collect the ministers within 30 miles of him, there were but two beside myself." However, on this occasion, "the meeting was owned of God," despite the generally hostile community. "It was in a place where infidels lately cut the pulpit Bible in pieces & scattered it around the church yard. The congregations were

[28]Society of the First Presbyterian Church of Elyria, MS Records, May 19, 1831.
[29]*New York Evangelist,* June 18, 1831, and J. J. S. to Fayette Shipherd, July 28, 1831 (Shipherd MSS).
[30]Elyria Presbyterian Society, MS Records, and A. H. Betts to A. Peters, Aug. 19, 1831 (A. H. M. S. MSS).
[31]American Home Missionary Society, *Sixth Report,* 1832, page 38.

small, but 15 took the anxious seats on the 2nd day."[32] In reporting the revival to the American Home Missionary Society Shipherd declared that at least half of the converts at the Elyria meetings came from adjacent towns. "When they returned to their homes, the Spirit of the Lord went with them, and in their several neighborhoods there have since been a number of hopeful conversions. In our place, conversions have been multiplied since that meeting, and we hope they yet will be. If we reckon those who reside in neighboring towns, there have been probably a hundred hopeful conversions . . . since my last report." Shipherd was exultant. "The dry bones of this valley," he wrote, "to which I have prophecied at my Master's bidding, & with many tears & sorrows, have begun to live."[33] Sometimes he met resistance. Not always were strange ministers welcomed in the frontier communities—especially if they advocated the radical "new measures" and pried into secular matters such as the drinking of alcoholic beverages. "I have recently returned from a six days meeting at Monroe in Huron Co. 40 ms. west," Shipherd wrote early in the spring of the following year to Fayette, "& have not yet recovered from the prostration of mind & body which it caused. It was one of the hardest fought battles between the powers of light & darkness that I ever witnessed, and poor I was obliged to stand in the forefront. The wicked had mustered & combined all their energies, . . . Twice while I was preaching they discharged muskets, (without lead) close upon us. At one time they fired against the door, bursting it open, & simultaneously thro' the windows, driving in upon us the glass & powder. But thro' Grace I was able to make such an application of it, as to deepen the impression of truth. The wrath of man praised God, & altho' it was a *school house* meeting some 25 or 30 manifested hope."[34]

[32]J. J. S. to Z. R. Shipherd, Apr. 6, 1831 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

[33]J. J. S. to Peters, July 4, 1831 (A. H. M. S. MSS). There are seven reports from Shipherd preserved in the American Home Missionary Society MSS, dated Jan. 6, Apr. 5, July 4, 1831, and Jan. 19, Apr. 5, July 5, and Oct. 10, 1832. Portions of three of these reports were printed in the *Home Missionary,* III, 223 (Mar. 1, 1831); IV, 87–88 (Sept. 1, 1831), and IV, 160 (Jan. 1, 1832). Paragraphs from his July (1831) report, besides being published in the September *Home Missionary,* were copied in the *New York Evangelist,* Sept. 10, 1831, and other periodicals. An earlier account of the Elyria revival from Shipherd's pen was copied from the *Ohio Observer* in the *Western Recorder,* Jan. 5, 1831.

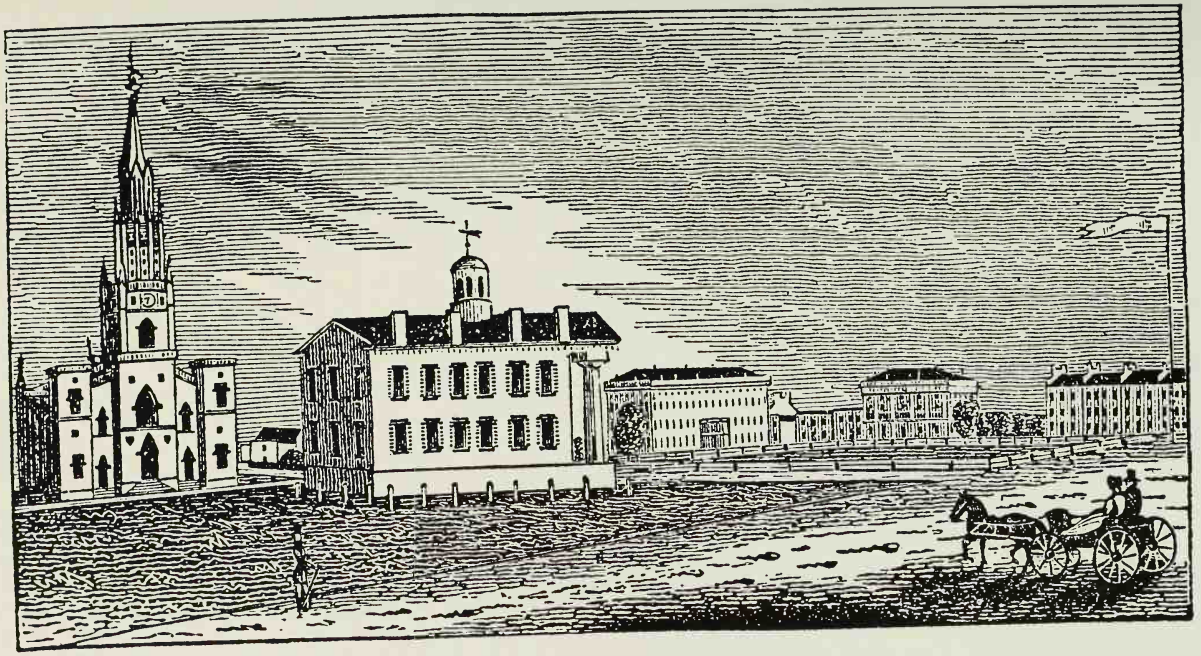
[34]J. J. S. to Fayette Shipherd, Apr. 2, 1832 (Shipherd MSS). There is a similar description of the same event in Shipherd's letter to his father of Apr. 9, 1832 (Treas. Off., File H).

Shipherd also threw himself enthusiastically into the temperance cause. We can easily imagine that there was need of temperance reform on the Reserve as everywhere on the frontier where life was hard and whiskey cheap. At the time of Shipherd's first arrival the stores of the village regularly served free whiskey to their customers as a special inducement to trade. Late in November of 1831 the church held a special meeting to discuss the question and, after a lengthy debate, was persuaded to adopt Shipherd's stand for complete abstinence from all spirituous beverages. They resolved "that distilled spirit is the bane of man, & that any but a medicinal use of it is inconsistent with the Christian character." Most of those present took the pledge to abstain from all use of distilled liquors as beverages.[35]

Early in 1832 Shipherd wrote to his father of his further work for the cause: "We yesterday held a County Meeting, & I rejoice to say that God was evidently with us. Our meeting was well attended, & powerfully addressed. Our place has been like the Dead Sea, but now there is such an agitation that I hope its waters will soon be purified. . . . I yesterday read an appeal to the inhabitants of our County, of which the Society have ordered a 1000 copies to be struck off for gratuitous circulation. When published I will send you one. You will doubtless think it quite *patriotic* for John; but such are most of my appellees that I thot it best to hide the *minister* believing that I should thereby most effectually accomplish the minister's work. It is a poor thing, but the best I could write in the time allowed me. I expect my time will be much occupied in the temperance work for some weeks to come. I have waged war against Alcohol in our County, with the design of fighting in person in all its towns. I hope I trust in the Arm of Omnipotence & shall wage an exterminating war."[36]

The address referred to was printed in an anonymous pamphlet under the title of *An Appeal to Patriots, Philanthropists, and Christians, in Behalf of Our Endangered Republic, and Its Suffering Members*.[37] It is indeed full of patriotism. Shipherd describes the nation with "her feet cemented to the soil of liberty

[35]First Presbyterian Society of Elyria, MS Records, Nov. 25, 1831.
[36]J. J. S. to Zebulon R. Shipherd, Jan. 10–12, 1832 (Treas. Off., File H).
[37]There is a copy in the Oberlin College Library. It was printed at Elyria and dated Jan. 11, 1832.



ELYRIA, 1846

(From Henry Howe, *Historical Collections of Ohio* [Cincinnati—1848])

by Parental blood—her stately frame compacted by indissoluble precepts—and her lofty head, looking down upon all the navies and armaments of nations, with invincible superiority." But there is a "subtle Foe, which threatens the accomplishment of what mighty nations cannot do—even the subvertion of our Grand Republic. . . . Do you ask his name? As friends and patriots, we reveal it, His name is *Alcohol;* but surnamed *Rum, Brandy, Gin,* and *Whiskey.*" He appeals to statistics to show that alcohol destroys three hundred and sixty million dollars annually—enough, he says, to pay off the national debt, render taxation unnecessary, build a great navy, build all the canals and railroads needed, found "seminaries of learning of every grade," establish asylums for all of the unfortunate, send the slaves back to Africa, give "a Bible to every family, and the living ministry to every people on our continent" and, indeed, "furnish the world with the word of God." Whatever one may think of the financial insight exhibited it certainly is clear that Shipherd was an ardent foe of Alcohol.

These aggressive measures raised up determined enemies. Conservatives were disturbed by the "excitement" associated with the revival, and aggressive temperance advocacy was looked upon by most Westerners and many church members in the early thirties as a species of extreme fanaticism. Shipherd was evidently deeply hurt by the attacks directed against him and seems to have become at this time a nervous as well as a physical wreck. Even in January of 1832 he wrote in a pessimistic vein to his brother: "Since Aug. I have been able to do but little for my people & the work of God has lamentably declined. My much enlarged flock have not relapsed into gross sins; but have fallen asleep."[38] By the following spring he was greatly discouraged.

"How long we shall remain in Elyria I know not," he wrote to his father in April. "The enemy comes in upon me like a flood; but my joy in the midst of trouble is that it is manifestly the enemy of God. The *good* people cleave to me. One of our lawyers, by the name of Parker, once resident in Midd., Vt. has publicly declared that there will be no peace in E. while I remain here, & that he will do all he can to effect my removal. He is making good his word. He has charged me with illicit

[38]J. J. S. to Fayette Shipherd, Jan. 30, 1832 (Shipherd MSS).

intercourse with Miss. C. [ollins]—& a multitude of enemies have pre[?] the charge till it has flown over the county, & I know not how much further. . . . I bless God that I have not been suffered to reproach the holy ministry comitted to my trust, & can rejoice in saying: 'The Lord is on my side, I will not fear what *man* can do unto me.' I expect sorer things than these. The signs of the times (political & religious), evince to me that the blood of the martyrs will ere long be demanded. The state of our country is indeed fearful. The God of nations only can save us from destroying ourselves.

"I know not but I should shrink from the fiery trial, but had rather the days of persecution would come than that the chh. shd. sleep in sin. 'The blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the Chh.' If my blood can make the church more fruitful by flowing *from* my veins, than by flowing in my veins let it depart, the grace of God being sufficient for me to endure the ordeal. My opinion is that Romanists, Atheists, Deists, Universalists, and all classes of God's enemies will *combine* against the Chh. & our once happy government seems to be fast preparing to favour the murderous projects."[39] The last for Andrew Jackson!

He felt that he made no headway at all. "I cannot keep my flock up, nor near to the Gospel standard, nor win over the impenitent to God," he wrote to his parents in August of 1832. On September 3 he was considering withdrawal: "I . . . feel that my sphere of usefulness is now much circumscribed. A large proportion of my congregation are now hoping in Jesus . . . and the emigrants to our place of the last year are, mostly, so hostile to God that they have not, many of them, even for once entered his house."[40] The following week he presented a half-hearted resignation to the church. "I have thought," he told them, "that there was a state of feeling towards me, which so curtailed my usefulness that I had better retire." Three days later he as half-heartedly withdrew the resignation, despite which the church voted fifteen to fourteen to ask presbytery for his dismission—Heman Ely, the founder of Elyria, casting the deciding vote![41]

But already John Jay Shipherd had evolved a grander scheme for bringing salvation to the Great Valley.

[39]J. J. S. to Zebulon R. Shipherd, Apr. 9, 1832 (Treas. Off., File H).

[40]J. J. S. to Z. R. Shipherd, Aug. 6, 1832 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS), and Sept. 3, 1832 (Treas. Off., File H).

[41]Presbyterian Society of Elyria, MS Records, Sept. 8, 10, 13, 14, 1832.

## CHAPTER IX

# *A GRAND SCHEME*

TO AN enthusiast of Shipherd's sensitive nature such apparent failure as that which faced him in Elyria was all but unbearable, and he looked around for a way in which he might be more useful to the Christian cause. It is not surprising that he should have been somewhat disillusioned as to the effectiveness of the ordinary ecclesiastical organizations in evangelizing the West. Would not a new colony of selected, consecrated souls, founded in the virgin forest far from the taint of established and sin-infected towns, be a more effective evangelical agency? There sin would not be allowed to get a start, the whole enterprise being devoted not to worldly ends but to the salvation of man's eternal soul. When the settlement was firmly established a school could be founded to educate the "hopefully pious," and the leaven of this western Zion might be spread by means of the missionaries and school teachers there educated and by means of subsidiary colonies, churches and schools throughout the whole wicked Mississippi Valley.

The plan was certainly not an entirely original one. The Yankees of this period were much interested in the possibility of civilizing and Christianizing the frontier by means of colonies of settlers from Connecticut, Vermont, Massachusetts or New York. They feared the crudity, the irreligion, the illiteracy, the lawlessness and the improvidence of the West, and felt the pressing need of such settlements to supplement the work of the missionary preachers and teachers. It is not difficult to find examples. In Rochester, only a few months after Finney's departure, a group of citizens held a public meeting to consider "sending a colony into the valley of the Mississippi" whose purpose would be "to exert an influence on the surrounding country and cause the Gospel to be preached."[1] At Royalton, Vermont,

[1] *Rochester Observer,* July 18, and Aug. 11, 1831.

it was proposed to establish in the West a colony of Vermonters "of good moral education and of industrious and enterprising habits," which "would be a sun, radiating its enlightening and vivifying rays" over that "moral waste."[2] The editor of the *Vermont Chronicle,* fearing that the movement would depopulate the state, felt called upon to editorialize against it. In the West, he said, the water was "universally bad," and new arrivals were certain to get the ague and the fever. Besides, who would want to give up Vermont's "ever varying prospect of hill, dale, and glen, of forest, grove, and clearing, of streams and streamlet, cascade and ravine" for the "unvaried insipid *flat*" of the "interminable prairie"?[3] Such discussions served, of course, chiefly to publicize the colony idea.

When Shipherd's house was finished, following the example of his master, Josiah Hopkins, he took three students into his home to prepare them for ministerial labors. One was Jabez Burrell, the son of the founder of the Sheffield settlement. He had been converted in Elyria during the revival of the previous May and was, according to his teacher's estimate, "tallented & devotedly pious." The second was the son of Henry Brown, the founder of Brownhelm; he had been converted by Finney while employed at Auburn, N. Y., as a bank clerk. Both, Shipherd wrote to his father, were "promising young men & shd. be better taught."[4] The third student was Philo Penfield Stewart.

Philo Penfield Stewart's greatest ambition as a boy was to have an unlimited supply of smooth, soft, white pine to whittle. He is said not only to have whittled out toys for his younger brothers but, on one occasion, made a useable wheelbarrow in this way. Stewart was not unique in this interest as he was born (in 1798) in Fairfield County of the Wooden Nutmeg State where the jacknife art had long been practiced. The boy's family was in modest circumstances, and when he was fourteen he was apprenticed to his uncle, John Penfield, of Pawlet, Vermont. John Penfield was a harness maker and so his young nephew was set to learn that trade, though he was never much interested in it. The important thing about this removal to Pawlet is that there young Stewart was allowed to attend Pawlet Academy and,

[2] *Vermont Chronicle,* July 1, 1831.
[3] Sept. 2, 1831.
[4] J. J. S. to Z. R. S., Dec. 1, 1831 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

while in attendance, met John Jay Shipherd among the other students.

Like Shipherd, Stewart felt the call to carry the gospel into the "Valley of Moral Death" and joined a mission to the Choctaw Indians at Mayhew in the State of Mississippi. From this field he was forced to retire on account of the ill health of his wife. Still hoping for a chance for usefulness in the West, he wrote to his old friend Shipherd in Elyria. "The field is white unto the harvest," replied Shipherd. "Throughout the new settlements of this whole region they are calling for help to 'break the Bread of Life and turn the hearts of the people unto the Lord.' " So Stewart came to Elyria.[5]

Stewart and Shipherd, talking, reading and praying together conceived the plan of the Oberlin colony and school. Shipherd described the plan in a letter written soon after to his brother Fayette:

"My students Brown and Burrell have both left. Br. Burrell's health has failed; (it was very feeble when he came here;) & Br. Brown is studying Greek with Br. Monteith in High School, which, by the way, is flourishing—about 50 scholars. Br. Stewart, or 'Steadfast' is here. Soon after he came he entered upon a course of study preparatory to the ministry, both of us yet doubting whether he could not be more useful as a layman, but unable to see where or how. At length, while reading in the Christian Spectator a Review of Dr. Henderson's Residence in Iceland,[6] delighted with the intelligence & Christian simplicity of its inhabitants, I proposed to Br. S. that we form a Colony for the promotion of like, or superior, intelligence & Christian simplicity. Pastor Oberlin's Bann De La Roche came up to second

[5][Mrs. E. C. Stewart], *P. P. Stewart, . . . A Life Sketch* (New York—1873), *passim.;* Hiel Hollister, *Pawlet for One Hundred Years* (Albany—1867), p. 245, and C. H. Smith, "Philo Penfield Stewart," *The Vermonter* (White River Junction, Vt.), XL, 12–15 (Jan., 1935).

[6]Ebenezer Henderson (1803–1877) was a Scotch clock and watch maker who studied theology in Edinburgh and became a Congregational Missionary and colporteur (distributor of tracts and Bibles) in Sweden and Iceland. In 1818 he published in Edinburgh an account of his travels in Iceland, which was reprinted in abridged form in Boston in 1831 (Ebenezer Henderson, *Iceland: or the Journal of a Residence in That Island During the Years 1814 and 1815*). The extensive review which Shipherd and Stewart read is in the *Quarterly Christian Spectator,* IV, 187–207 (June, 1832). On Henderson see the *Dictionary of National Biography.*

the proposal. O! tho't we, how would God be honored in the influence of his religion upon the world if it were divorced from Mammon, & wedded to simplicity & true wisdom! In the examples given by the Icelanders & Pastor Oberlin's Bann, God has been greatly honored, & every one, almost who has viewed them with a Christian eye has been ashamed of his own conformity to this selfish world.

"Now, said we, let us gather some of the right spirits & plant them in the dark Valley, to give such an example as Pastor Oberlin's flock, & they will make our churches ashamed of their unholy alliances with earth. We talked, we tho't, we prayed, & at length came to the deliberate & serious conclusion that, God prospering us, we wd. do this:

"We wd. seek out the most favorable location & gather a colony to be organized under the following, or like regulations: viz. each member of the colony shall consider himself a steward of the Lord, & hold only so much property as he can advantageously manage for the Lord. Every one, regardless of worldly maxims, shall return to Gospel simplicity of dress, diet, houses & furniture, & all appertaining to him, & be industrious & economical with the view of earning & saving as much as possible, not to hoard up for old age, & for children, but to glorify God in the salvation of men: And that no one need be tempted to hoard up, the colonists (as members of one body, of which Christ is the head), mutually pledge that they will provide in all respects for the widowed, orphan, & all the needy as well as for themselves & households.

"To promote useful education at home & abroad, schools shall be established in the C.[olony], from the infant school up and as high as may be, at least, as high as the highest High School. The hope is that we may have, eventually, an institution which will afford the best education for the Ministry. Connected with the Academy will be a farm & workshop, where, with four hours labor per day, students shall defray their entire expense. This may seem impossible; but if they will do as my entire family do now, eat bread & milk for breakfast & supper & a plain dinner of flesh & vegetables, & wear plain clothing, they can do it I am confident. Around our Schools we will plant all our mechanics, that those who should, may learn trades while gathering their education. All the children of the C.[olony] are to be

thoroughly taught in English, to whatever service they may be destined; yet they are to labor so much while acquiring it, that it shall not in the least disqualify them for manual labor avocations. And those who are liberally educated for professions, may like Paul & other learned Orientals acquire the trades which, in such fields as many ministers must occupy, will be of great value, & to all of some profit. The hope is that God will call many of the children of the Col.[ony] to the Ministry, & to useful stations in the world. The sole aim will be to train them up for usefulness: And taken as they wd. be from the vain amusements & strong temptations of the world—seeing that all around them were living not for themselves but for God, it is hoped that thro' the truth & spirit they wd. most of them consecrate themselves to the service of the Lord. In addition to the children of the Col. we wd. educate School Teachers & Ministers from the four winds; for on our plan we can instruct multitudes. If we can instruct candidates for the Ministry, Home & Foreign, & for school teaching here, where most of them ought to labor, & so that they shall *work their way* & yet obtain the best education; will you not send us many pupils? We propose a manual labor establishment for *females* also, which in our estimation is immensely important for reasons which I have not room to name, but which will occur to you. The pastor & teachers are to simplify as much as others, & of course live on small salaries. Br. S. & I spent a week in exploring the country south of us, & think we shall locate in one of three places within 30 ms. of this."[7]

In a letter written a few days earlier he described his project to his parents: "We do not now keep pace with the increase of population in our own country. Something *must* be done or a millennium will never cheer our benighted world. The chh. must be restored to gospel simplicity & devotion. As a means wh. I hope God wd. bless to the accomplishment of some part of this work, I propose thro' his assistance to plant a colony somewhere in this region whose chief aim shall be to glorify God & do good to men to the utmost extent of their ability. They are to simplify food, dress, &c—to be industrious & economical, & give all over their current, or annual expense to the spread of the Gospel. They are to hoard up nothing for old age or for their children;

[7]J. J. Shipherd to Fayette Shipherd, Aug. 13, 1832 (Shipherd MSS). The paragraphing has been supplied.

but are mutually to covenant that they will provide for the widowed, orphan, & all the needy as for themselves & families. They are to establish schools of the first order from an infant school up to an academic school which shall afford a thorough education in English & the useful languages; & if Providence favor it, at length, instruction in Theology. I mean *Practical* Theology. They are to connect work shops & a farm with the institution, & so simplify diet & dress that by *four* hours labor per day young men will defray their entire expense. And young women working at the spinning wheel & loom will defray much of their expense. And all will thus save money, & what is more promote muscular, mental & moral vigor. In these schools all the children of the colony are to be well educated whether destined to a profession or manual labor; for those desiring to be mechanics will learn their trades while in a course of study. These schools will also educate school teachers for our desolate valley, & many ministers for our dying world. Also instruct the children & youth of the surrounding population. To do this we want some twenty-five or more *good* families, & $2,000 outfit for the schools. I have sought out a good location 25 ms south of this where new land may be had at $2.50 to 3.50 per acre. Dear Parents; shall I try? I do feel that such an establishment wd. not only do much itself—but exert a mighty influence upon the churches, & lead them along in the path of Gospel self-denial. I have given you but a brief & imperfect sketch, but you will discern its bearings."[8]

The increasingly difficult situation in the church in Elyria confirmed Shipherd in his determination to devote himself wholly to the new enterprise. At the beginning of September he wrote to his father:

"My confidence in the utility of my colonizing plan is strengthened by prayer, meditation, & conference with the intelligent & pious. Yet I feel that it is a mighty work, difficult of accomplishment. But when anyone goes about a great & good work, Satan will roll mountains in his way. Believing that all he has rolled in our way can be surmounted, thro' the grace of God; & that I can do more for his honor, & the good of souls in this vally of dry bones, by gathering such a colony, & planting it,

[8] J. J. S. to Zebulon R. Shipherd, Aug. 6, 1832 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

with its litterary & religious institution, in this region, I am inclined, Providence favoring, *to resign my charge* & spend the winter in the East for the purpose."[9]

The first essentials were the "twenty-five or more good families," the $2,000, and the land on which to colonize. Depending largely upon Providence for guidance, Shipherd and Stewart, "procured horses and started out to find a suitable location. They had nothing to purchase with, but felt that if it was from the Lord, the means would be provided. They knew of this tract of land of about 7,000 acres [in the unsettled portion of Russia Township]. They rode into the woods and dismounted and hitched their horses, and knelt and asked direction." We are left to imply that the answer to their prayers was affirmative. The decision was supposedly accompanied by signs and wonders. "Coming out of the woods, they met a hunter, who said, ten minutes before you entered the woods, a black bear with two cubs came down from that tree you hitched your horses to." So runs Mrs. Shipherd's narrative, written many years later.[10] Shipherd's own account is, comparatively, dry and unromantic. "I came to this city three days since to attend Synod," he wrote to his brother Fayette from Detroit. "I was prospered in my journey which I took by land, for the purpose of exploring, with special reference to *the Colony*. . . . I have not yet found any location in all respects so eligible as one in Lorain County 9 ms from Elyria."[11] In all events it appears that the present site of Oberlin in what was then the unscarred wilderness of south-central Russia Township, was carefully and thoughtfully selected from all northern Ohio as the most eligible spot for a colony and school!

The owners of the tract of land were Messrs. Titus Street and Samuel Hughes of New Haven, Connecticut. Captain Eliphalet Redington, postmaster at (South) Amherst, was their local agent but he did not have the authority to give away land—only to sell it—and the founders had no funds. Redington was interested in the scheme and willing to take joint responsibility with Stewart on the ground while Shipherd went East to beg a gift of land from

[9]J. J. S. to Z. R. S., Sept. 3, 1832 (Treas. Off., File H).
[10]Esther Shipherd, MS Life of John Jay Shipherd.
[11]J. J. S. to Fayette Shipherd, Oct. 6, 1832 (Shipherd MSS). The day before writing this letter Shipherd delivered an address at the third anniversary meeting of the Western Reserve Branch of the American Education Society, also in Detroit (*American Quarterly Register*, V, 264 [Feb., 1833]).

Street and Hughes, and secure money and colonists. Stewart at Elyria and Redington at Amherst would receive the colonists as they arrived and manage the beginning of physical preparation for their reception: the clearing of the forest and building of a mill and other community buildings.

The name given to the colony and school was derived from a little book published in 1830 by the American Sunday School Union: *The Life of John Frederic Oberlin, Pastor of Waldbach, in the Ban de la Roche.* "They [the colonists]," wrote Shipherd in December, "are to be called the Oberlin Colony, after Pastor Oberlin, late of the Ban De Laroche in France, whose memoir is published by the Am. S. S. Union." Oberlin's benevolent social work and interest in Sabbath Schools naturally appealed to Shipherd as setting a fine example for his colony.[12]

* * *

John Jay Shipherd had started out single-handed to conquer the Valley of the Mississippi for the Lord. He was returning for reenforcements—recruits for his training camp at Oberlin—recruits and ammunition. The plan was as yet an airy vision, for money and men were still lacking. His wife, an expectant mother, he left in Elyria with the three baby boys under the care of Mr. and Mrs. Stewart. Would that family ever be united again? This was the question that repeatedly took possession of his mind as Shipherd rode along, his ambling horse stumbling over loose stones and slipping in the half-frozen mud. He allowed the reins to fall loosely on the animal's neck, only now and then pulling him up at an unusually steep decline. The newly cut clearings

[12]J. J. S. to Fayette Shipherd, Dec. 10, 1832 (Shipherd MSS). There is a copy of this edition of the life of Oberlin in the Oberlin College Library.

Jean Frederic Oberlin (or Johann Frederich Oberlin) was born in Strasbourg in 1740 and died in 1826. He graduated from the University of Strasbourg in 1755 and received his bachelor's degree in 1758. For sixty years he served as Protestant pastor of the parish of Waldbach (or Waldersbach) in the Ban de la Roche (or Steinthal) in Alsace, some thirty miles southwest of his native city. The Ban de la Roche was an isolated and particularly backward area; and its people were poverty-stricken and ignorant. Oberlin was a real pastor to his flock. He helped them build roads and bridges; he sponsored a public-health program; he revolutionized local methods of agriculture; he encouraged industry, and he established an adequate school system, which included "infant schools" somewhat like Froebel's later kindergartens. His achievements were sensational and he received widespread recognition. In 1819 he was made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor.—For a brief sketch see Ernest Hatch Wilkins, *John Frederick Oberlin, A Bicentenary Address,* Sept., 18, 1940 [Oberlin—1940]. The most important extensive biography is still Daniel E. Stoeber, *Vie de J. F. Oberlin* (Paris—1831).

and occasional groups of scattered farm buildings scarcely left an impression upon his mind. When his thoughts were not upon his Esther and their little ones he was dreaming of the village of consecrated souls and the college of inspired leaders and aspiring students which should soon appear in the wilderness behind him, sending out its missionaries to the farthest outposts of white settlement and even among the red men, until the "Valley of Dry Bones" should be drenched by the living waters. When he reached towns of any considerable size he climbed off his horse and, mud besplashed and stiffened by long riding, sought the house of the local minister or some charitable deacon who had been recommended by mutual acquaintances. To all he unfolded his plans for a colony and school which were to revolutionize the West for Christ. To all he applied for contributions, but with slight success.

Shipherd is first heard from in Silver Creek, New York, then called Fayette, from which place he wrote to his brother on December 10:

"The objects of my tour you know, in part at least. I will state them definitely. My first aim is to collect about 50 families of the Lord's peculiar people zealous of good works, & colonize them in Russia, Lorain County, Ohio, ten miles south west of Elyria. . . . The second object is to raise 15,000 dollars for the Oberlin Manual Labor Institute. The third is to preach dissension to the large churches of the east, i.e. to send some of their most efficient members to join the fellow chhs. of the west, & the scattered sheep of the wilderness, & stir them [up] & aid them to build the Lord's house. What I have [written] about this enterprise before I know not; but I want to say sheets full about it now, & receive sheets full from you in answer: Still I must omit the whole & do it the more cheerfully, because I hope in the good providence of God to discuss the subject fully, & within a few weeks, *in your study*. Oh that I were there!

"I am in a borrough of your name 200 ms. east of my dear family; from whom I have been absent 21½ weeks. I am only 200 ms. on my journey because my horse has sprained her ancle so that for days she measures the way with a tedious limp. I cannot cure her nor exchange her; but am compelled to advance with her as I am able. This trial of my patience I regard as a needed lesson of patience to prepare me for the sorer trials in my mighty

work. The Lord will overrule it for good, & I am fully satisfied Good is His will."[13]

Writing in the same letter a week later from Buffalo, he showed evidence of petulance: "I have here for days been trying to get money out of the hard hearts of *Buffaloes,* but while their Robes indicate warmth, they do not fill the Lord's treasury. The Lord has opened the hearts of a few to give Sixty two doll[ar]s." Not until he reached Rochester was the "Corresponding Agent" of the (still nonexistent) Oberlin Collegiate Institute able to send back to Stewart an order for one hundred and sixty-six dollars.[14] It was slow work, and several weeks elapsed before another hundred was added. The receipts were much below what had been counted on.

Having visited many of the towns of New York State with rather indifferent success, Shipherd passed on to New Haven where he called on the owners of the land on which Oberlin was to be located. His success in obtaining a conditional gift of the tract desired from two hard-headed Connecticut merchants is good evidence that the Founder was not entirely lacking in resourcefulness and persuasive powers. The contract entered into on February 16, 1833, between Shipherd on the one hand and Titus Street and Samuel Hughes on the other provided for the donation of five hundred acres to the trustees of the Oberlin Manual Labor Institute "to be forever appropriated to the use of the same"; possession to be granted immediately and full title at the end of three years, provided that at the end of that time the school should be in successful operation in "suitable buildings" valued at not less than five thousand dollars and with at least fifty students enrolled. Further, Street and Hughes agreed to sell five thousand acres to the Oberlin colonists at $1.50 an acre in farms of fifty to two hundred acres. This last was also a real concession in view of the fact that the proprietors sold the remainder of their holdings for an average of six dollars an acre.[15]

It was welcome news to those who waited in Ohio. On March

[13]J. J. Shipherd to Fayette Shipherd, Dec. 10, 17, 1832 (Shipherd MSS).

[14]P. P. Stewart to J. J. Shipherd, Feb. 4, 1833 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

[15]Letter of A. H. Redington in *The Owl* (Oberlin), Apr. 29, 1898. An old notebook found in the Treasurer's Office contains the following note apparently in Shipherd's handwriting: "When 5,000 $ worth of buildings are erected & there are or have been 50 Students at Oberlin then Street & Hughes are to give a Deed of 500 acres of Land. Probably by 1st Jany, 1835—*See to it.*"

12 Stewart wrote to Shipherd from Elyria: "We praise the Lord for the goodness & mercy in which he has crowned your labors.—having particular refference to the *contract* you have obtained from Messrs. Street & Hughes. The donation to the Institution is far above what we anticipated. Viewing it as an indication of Providence we can at least regard it as one of very encouraging character. I think it will serve to produce a favorable impression in this part of the country. Those who have no confidence in the *plans* may be admonished to speak their sentiments openly."[16]

Greatly encouraged, Shipherd returned to the churches of New York and New England for more funds and men and women who would join in the work. In the month from April 15 to May 18 Eliphalet Redington, now treasurer of the "Board of Trust," acknowledged the receipt of nearly six hundred dollars collected by Shipherd.[17] By the latter part of May he felt certain of success. On the 28th he wrote to the trustees: "That we can raise the $15,000 contemplated I am confident, & I believe my confidence is well founded. The wise & good uniformly approve our plans, & have aided, & express a determination yet more to aid in executing them. To fill out the $15,000 will doubtless be much easier than to do, what thro' the grace of God, we have already executed."[18] Subscriptions for at least ten thousand he expected to receive before September. At Thetford, Vermont, where his brother James was principal of the Academy, he secured pledges for over a hundred and fifty dollars. Most of the gifts were in small amounts: some five and ten dollars and one $1.50 from "retrenchment of tea & coffee." It was at Thetford that a physician offered to "give pills if they will be rec[eive]d." James wrote to his brother that according to the opinion of one townsman "you have 'milked this people pretty well'."[19]

In many towns which he visited Shipherd appointed agents to continue soliciting funds, receive payments and subscriptions and encourage colonists to emigrate. The reports of some of these agents give evidence of the slow progress of the work. Late in April, Mark Goss wrote from Geneva, New York: "I have collected $14.50 only, I have partially contracted with four families

[16]P. P. Stewart to J. J. Shipherd, Mar. 12, 1833 (Treas. Off., File I).
[17]E. Redington to J. J. S., May 20, 1833 (File H).
[18]J. J. S. to the Trustees of the Oberlin Institute, May 28, 1833 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).
[19]James K. Shipherd to J. J. S., May 25, 1833 (Treas. Off., File H).

who partially agree to go to Oberlin in the fall—not before. I have spent some little time, according to my minutes three or four weeks, . . . I have been discouraged, & lain down *as in the furrow,* time & again in finding the cold hartedness of pretended . . . christians. . . . All I have done has been by littles."[20]

Another report from "East Berkshire," is even less encouraging: "I have done but little relative to your concern & have charged nothing for my services. I have however attended to it sufficiently [to see] that the obstacles are great and numerous & the prospect of success, very [slight]. I have already met with entire defeat with several [of the] candidates which I had in view. One is dangerously sick. Another from Lowel has been trying for years to get such a society into operation, now finds that he has 'married a wife & cannot come'. He is still anxious if he could persuade his wife. Another pious family are ready but the man is a poor phisition. So all make excuse. When I look at these lions in the way I am ready to give all over for lost. But I look again for some bright speck in this cloud of darkness. Imperious duty demands an effort. . . .

"I firmly believe that God will bless every effort in a work so benevolent & useful. . . .

"There is not an absolute certainty that I shall not get something at last."[21]

But wherever Shipherd went he left behind him some who were completely converted to his scheme and who earnestly prayed daily "that the barley loaf [might] be baked at that institution which shall make the camp of Midian tremble."[22] There were a few who were ready to sell their property, pull up stakes and throw their lot in with the new colony. There is no note of hesitation or uncertainty in the letter of T. S. Ingersoll from Ogden, N. Y., written in the month of March:

"I am glad the negotiations are so happily concluded, with Street & Hughes & on so good terms. Some I have found have been disposed to doubt whether Street & Hughes would sell their land for this object so cheap as you named. And others have doubted whether we should, after all, succeed in attaining a

[20]M. Goss to J. J. S., Apr. 20, 1833 (Treas. Off., File C).

[21]"Burk" [Rev. P. Bailey] to J. J. S., [?] 12, 1833 (Treas. Off., File A). The gaps filled in in brackets by the author are in some kind of code or shorthand.

[22]Hovey to Shipherd, Jan. 11, 1833.

sufficient farm. But instead of 200 acres, they have given 500 acres I see by your letter. I rejoice that you succeed as well as you do, especially in obtaining colonists, who can remove soon. I have not sold my farm yet; but am making every calculation as if I had: trusting that the Lord will send somebody to buy in his own time which I shall be satisfied with. I shall go to Oberlin in May, make all necessary arrangements for the reception of the family to remove in the fall."[23]

Ingersoll was also evidently acting as agent, for he continues in the same letter: "It is but small sums that I can get from the churches where I go; from 5 to 20 dollars. I labour not to do the work of the Lord deceitfully. I am now trying to obtain 2 or 3 females to go to Oberlin as school teachers & other useful employments. I don't know as I shall succeed; it is so hard to be pruned with some; & others if they will bear pruning something else is in the way. However, I see the hand of the Lord in the work, & in the efforts I am making & believe it will go forward. I am glad to hear that the executive committee are about commencing the saw mill."

On the very same day Asahel Munger, a carpenter and joiner of Lockport, New York, wrote of his intentions: "I am proposing to go to Oberlin Institute.—If providence should permit, soon after the opening of navigation. We have Set the first week in May to move—may be a few days later."[24] Skilled workers of all kinds would be especially in demand in the first years of settlement. It was undoubtedly with great satisfaction that Shipherd received early in April the following message:

"We are calculating to be in Albany the first of May, I want all the colonists who go from this region to be there at that time, if practicable. I wish to have you write to the Agent in the colony that if he wants me to purchase any articles for the colony I wish him to make out a bill of the articles he wants me to purchase and send [to] your brother in Troy. A hand grindstone will be wanted first. I shall carry one set of tools. . . . Mr. Morgan is calculating to go on with us. Yours with respect,

Bela Hall"[25]

Bela Hall, as will be gathered from his letter, was a mechanic.

[23]T. S. Ingersoll to J. J. S., Mar. 18, 1833 (Treas. Off., File D).
[24]Asahel Munger to J. J. S., Mar. 18, 1833 (File F).
[25]Bela Hall to J. J. S., Apr. 2, 1833 (File D).

In July we find him in Cleveland working on the engine for the colony. Ingersoll, Munger and Daniel Morgan (mentioned in Hall's letter) were also among the first colonists who came to Oberlin.

In the middle of May Shipherd wrote from Andover, Massachusetts: "During *one week,* I obtained in N. H. five colonists, & from them & others 1,000 [dollars?] subscriptions. Here I am like to obtain the man, of all others I have seen, best qualified to superintend the Ob. Institute; viz. S. R. Hall, Principal of the Teachers Sem.—Author of Lectures on School-keeping, of which the legislature of N. Y. purchased for the common schools 10,000 cops. &c."[26] The third object of Shipherd's mission, after money and colonists, was able and morally purposeful teachers. No man was better fitted for the headship of the new school than Samuel Read Hall. His emphasis on the necessity of combining moral, religious and mental training was reminiscent of Jean Frederic Oberlin and, of course, particularly pleasing to Shipherd. His *Lectures on School-Keeping,* published in 1829, was the first, and for long the most popular, American book on teaching methods. His first teaching and writing was done at Concord, Vermont, but in 1830 he became entangled in the controversy over Masonry and found it desirable to leave and accept an appointment as head of the Teachers' Seminary at Andover. Two years later he organized the "School Agents Society" whose purpose was to "encourage young men to become teachers . . . especially . . . in the Valley of the Mississippi."[27] Naturally Shipherd found him in a receptive mood. In the latter part of May, Shipherd wrote to his brother James: "I spent several days at Andover in Br. Hall's school, attended his examination &c. . . . In bro. Hall's Sem.y at And.r we have an intimation of what Oberlin will be; for he, the Principal of that Sem. will probably become prest. of Oberlin."[28]

The next week the Founder wrote to the trustees recommending the appointment of Hall as head of the proposed school:

[26]J. J. S. to Fayette Shipherd, May 14, 1833 (Shipherd MSS).

[27]Samuel R. Hall, *Lectures on School-Keeping* (Boston: Published by Richardson, Lord and Holbrook . . . 1829), and Arthur D. Wright and George E. Gardner, *Hall's Lectures on School-Keeping* (Hanover, N. H.—1929). *Cf.* the introduction entitled "The Life and Works of Samuel Read Hall" on pages 9–30. There is a biography in the *D. A. B.*

[28]J. J. S. to James K. Shipherd, May 22, 1833 (Treas. Off., File H).

"I recommend that you invite the Revd. Saml. R. Hall, Principal of the Teachers Sem. of Andover, Mass., to become the President of the Oberlin Institute. You probably already know something of his reputation, altho' he has been publicly known but a little time. . . . I spent a few days with him in his school & out, & confidently recommend him as better qualified to superintend our Institution than any man I have met or heard of who could be obtained. And indeed I know of no one, could we obtain him, in whom there is more of what we want than in Mr. Hall. For (1) His Piety is more like the Divine Teacher's than usual. He labors with his might to do good in school & out. (2) He is better acquainted with the art of Teaching than any one I can find, having studied it diligently for many years. (3) His education, altho' not Collegiate, is sufficiently extensive—much more profound than is usual with graduates from our best Colleges. (4) He is a Manual Labor man. (5) He is of suitable age—38 years. (6) He is a practical teacher—makes any thing a student learns useful to him. (7) He does not teach for money, but to do good. (8) He is deeply interested in the West. (9) His government excells any I am acquainted with—he teaches his pupils to govern themselves, & (10) I think he would, to increase his usefulness, accept your invitation."[29]

Here are the qualifications by which prospective teachers in the Oberlin Institute were to be tested: piety, high moral purpose, ability in teaching, and scholarship.

In the same letter Shipherd proposed the election of Louisa Gifford of the Geneva Female Seminary as teacher of the Oberlin Female Department, of James Shipherd, his brother, as temporary head of the whole school until such time as Hall found it convenient to take personal charge, and of Dr. James Dascomb, Mr. Hall's brother-in-law, to teach scientific subjects and be the colony physician. "In the fourth place," wrote Shipherd, "I recommend that you elect Doct. Jas. Dascom of Boscawen, N. H. Lecturer & professor of Chemistry, Botany, Physical Education or Anatomy & Nat. Philosophy. Doct. D. is a young Physician of promise—A pupil of Doct. Mussey of Dartmouth College—said by him to be decidedly the best scholar in his class of 50 members. He is highly recommended by Mr. Hall whom I

[29]J. J. S. to the Trustees of the Oberlin Institute, May 28, 1833 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

nominate as Prest., as a Christian, a Physician, & Lecturer. Bro. Hall & I think that the Physician of the Colony shd. be a Lecturer in the Sem., because we cant afford a full salary to such a lecturer, or full employment to a Physician." Of these three, Dascomb was the only one to accept.

In June Hall was making his plans for eventual removal to Oberlin, though he was not formally invited to become President by the trustees until the meeting of September 13. June 8 he wrote from Andover:

"I have made some arrangements with regard to apparatus, & have obtained the refusal [?] of the best Electrical Machine ever made in this country. I felt unwilling to let so fine a chance fail of being improved. The plate will be 33 or 34 inches in diameter, & will be superb. It will cost about 25 dollars more than the machine belonging to this Seminary—the other apparatus will come 100 or 150 dollars less.

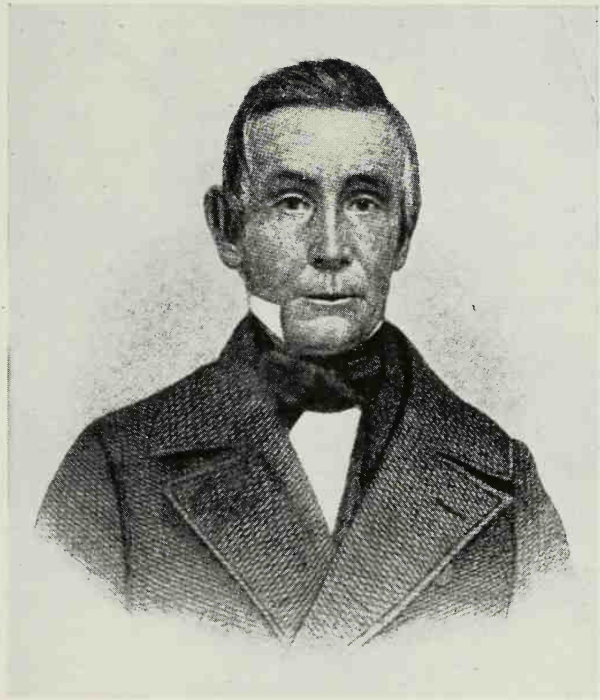
"I wish you to reserve a farm or two for some of my acquaintances, & I will write them on the subject as soon as convenient.

"My health, at the present moment is very poor. I have seldom been so near 'shut up' by a cold, tho' I think it is abating."[30]

As James Shipherd declined his appointment and Hall would be unable to come until late in 1834, late summer still found the Oberlin Institute without a head. An appeal to Hall for recommendations resulted in the election of Seth Waldo. John J. Shipherd wrote to the trustees from Boston in August: "I have written Andover Theo. Sem. & engaged, if you approve, Mr. Seth H. Waldo, who I believe will succeed as well as my brother. He will have to leave the Sem'y. in his Senior year, but I can no where else find the man we want, & the faculty of the Sem'y consent to his leaving. They, the present, & the Collegiate classmates of Mr. Waldo, & S. R. Hall in whose Teacher's Sem'y Mr. W. has taught, all recommend him. I shall not therefore describe him particularly. He has taught occasionally for twelve years & with success both in common Schools & Academies. He is about thirty years of age."[31] On August 23 Shipherd wrote to his father from Utica, on his way back to Ohio: "God greatly prospered me in my Eastern tour. At Andover, I secured a teacher

[30] S. R. Hall to J. J. S., June 8, 1833 (Treas. Off., File D).

[31] J. J. S. to the Trustees of the Oberlin Institute, Aug. 9, 1833 (O. C. Lib., Misc. MSS).



SAMUEL READ HALL,
FIRST PRESIDENT-ELECT OF OBERLIN

(Reproduced from A. D. Wright and George E. Gardner, *Hall's Lectures on School-Keeping* [Hanover, N.H.—1929] by special permission of the authors)

in bro. James' place; & on Cape Cod an Agent in my place."[32] The agent secured on Cape Cod was Benjamin Woodbury, who took over the work of soliciting funds in the East where Shipherd left it.

In the meantime, in May, Esther Shipherd went by steamboat and canal back to her parents' home in Ballston, where her husband joined her and saw, for the first time, his fourth son then two months old. The other children had been left with the Stewarts in Elyria.[33] In late August the Shipherds started back to Ohio—to Elyria—and to Oberlin. Some money and many friends had been secured. Several colonists were known to be already on the ground busily engaged in felling the forest and building homes. Worthy teachers were appointed and had promised to come. The Shipherd family was all well and healthy and about to be reunited. "We performed the journey in an open buggy with a willow cradle at our feet," wrote Mrs. Shipherd, "often remarking that it was the pleasantest journey that we had ever performed." Thus, early in the autumn, Shipherd came to his colony.

The Shipherds returned to Oberlin on September 12, 1833, and a very important meeting of the "Board of Trust" was held on September 13. At this meeting Shipherd secured votes appointing Hall, Waldo, and Dascomb as teachers and Woodbury as agent in the East,[34] but the main business was the presentation of the report of his financial agency. This report shows that he secured $1462.75 in cash, of which $115.13 was used for travelling expenses and "$333.03 have been borrowed by John J. Shipherd to buy a horse, waggon, &c.—to defray current expenses of self & family & pay debts." The subscriptions, paid and unpaid, secured on this mission amounted to $3,641.12, which, plus the five hundred acres of land given by Street and Hughes and several gifts of colonists, represented the total assets of Oberlin in September, 1833.[35]

[32] J. J. S. to Zebulon R. Shipherd, Aug. 23, 1833 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

[33] Esther R. Shipherd and Mrs. Stewart to J. J. S., Apr. 13, 1833 (Treas. Off., File H); P. P. Stewart to Fayette Shipherd, May 21, 1833 (File I), and J. J. S. to James K. Shipherd, May 22, 1833 (File H).

[34] Trustees' Minutes, Sept. 13, 1833 (Sec. Off., Oberlin College).

[35] "J. J. Shipherd, Report Sept. 1833—From December 22, 1832 to September 12, 1833—O. C. Institute *File No. 1*" (Misc. Archives).

# CHAPTER X

## *OBERLIN COLONY*

WHILE Shipherd was seeking men and money in the East, Stewart in Elyria and Eliphalet Redington in Amherst and their associated members of the "Board of Trust" were making the local preparations. A trustees' meeting (perhaps the first) was held on March 8, 1833, at Amherst. Redington reported it to Shipherd in a letter of that date: "The Trustees of the Oberlin Institute have been in Session this day at my house. At the opening of the Session the Throne of Grace was addressed in a Heart felt and verry appropriate manner by the President, Hon. H. Brown [Founder of Brownhelm]. Mr. Stewart was appointed Secretary pro. tem. and after reading Contract and your letters, proceeded to appoint an Executive Committee consisting of Judge Brown, Messrs Pease & Stewart."[1] The "Contract" referred to is undoubtedly the contract with Street and Hughes for the gift and purchase of the colony lands.

A succinct summary of the work of this meeting is contained in a letter written by Stewart a few days later: "There was a meeting of the trustees at Capt. Redington's on Friday last. . . . The Board thought it would be best to put up a Steam Saw-Mill the present season if sufficient funds shd be obtained. It was thought proper to defer purchasing an engine for the present, & the members of the Board are to improve the opportunities they may have, to ascertain where a good one may be obtained. As to the clearing of land it was thot best to make a contract with some responsible man, if such an one can be found. As to putting in a spring crop, it was considered to be out of

[1]Eliphalet Redington to J. J. S., Mar. 8, 1833 (Treas. Off., File H). The leading citizens of Wellington (Frederick Hamlin), Amherst (present South Amherst—Capt. Eliphalet Redington), and Brownhelm (Henry Brown) were all members of the first Board. Brown and Hamlin sat as lay "judges" in the first sessions of the Lorain County Court.—*Cf.* A. R. Webber, *Early History of Elyria and Her People* (Elyria—1930), 40–41.

the question. Brother Pease is expected to go on in the course of a few weeks. He is to labor for the Institute one year, & be provided for from the common stock. It is not certain that we shall go on to the Colony ground the present season."[2] The most important matter taken up was undoubtedly the question of the building of the steam mill to furnish power for sawing lumber for houses and later for grinding grain and other purposes. One of the leading inducements offered by Shipherd to colonists was that the trustees would build such a mill. No definite action was taken, pending the receipt of more news from Shipherd with regard to his financial success.

Perhaps more welcome to Shipherd in his lonely journey through the East was the word of encouragement with which Redington's letter closed:

"Mr. Pease & Family will go on to the ground immediately after our next meeting, and we now have a comfortable hope that Rusia will actually be invaded, but we also hope the invasion will not be as disasterous as was that made by the Corsican Despot, when he entered the Dominions of the Great Autocrat of the North. In this region it is manifest that the intrest taken in the plan, and success of the Institution is increasing, and even some who have enveloped the undertaking with Clouds and darkness, begin to discover a glimering ray of light on the subject. And may the all wise Disposer of events continue to increase light until eyes Shall See, all hearts Shall feel, and all hands Shall be opened to bestow their mite, not only on this, but on many others of the kind throughout our land. Mr. Leavenworth closed our Meeting this day by Prayer and I think we all felt that fervency in Prayer, and perseverance in duty to our Covenant GOD, to ourselves, and our fellow men, will accomplish much. On Such means depend our contemplated School & Colony, and by means of Such Schools, Labourers must be raised up, qualified, and Sent forth to evangelize the World."[3]

In April work was begun on the laying out of the grounds. On the eighth Esther Shipherd wrote to her husband: "Mr. Tracy has drawn a sketch of the vilige plot, the Institute, the Meeting house and parsonage, and has got the building all erected on paper." A little later Stewart reported, "The Board

[2]P. P. Stewart to J. J. S., Mar. 12, 1833 (Treas. Off., File I).
[3]Redington to J. J. S., Mar. 8, 1833.

here met on the Colony ground & determined the boundaries of the Institute's land, location for the Steam Saw-mill, etc." On May 20 another meeting of the trustees was held in Oberlin. Though they "had nothing but logs on the ground for seats" they were not troubled by that for their eyes were on the future. At this meeting the colony was laid out according to a plan proposed by Shipherd. "We had a meeting of a part of the members of the Board of Trust on the Colony ground on Monday of this week," Stewart wrote to Shipherd. "The boundaries of the public square were fixed. It is to be 60 rods long & 40 wide. It is to be bounded North by the East & West Road. East, by the North & South Road. The School buildings are to be on the West & the Boarding house & the Farmers houses on the south."[4] Here we have the beginnings of the later Tappan Square or "Campus." The "North & South Road" is now Main Street and the "East & West Road," Lorain.

Clearing was begun early in the spring. By the eighth of April a considerable area had been opened under the direction of Mr. Addison Tracy, one of the trustees. Shortly after, Peter Pindar Pease, the first colonist, started his log cabin.[5] On the nineteenth his family moved in. It "was only a shed, with no door, no windows, and no flooring, excepting rough slabs which supplied one-half the scanty room. A ditch furnished water for cooking and drinking. The first meal was cooked, as many after it were, beside a stump; bread was baked upon the top of a poor box stove or in the ashes."[6] When a door was hung at the cabin entrance Pease wrote on it: "I beseech you, brethren, by

[4]Esther Shipherd to J. J. S., Apr. 8, 1833; E. Redington to J. J. S., July 8, 1833, and Stewart to J. J. S., May 25 [June 1], 1833 (Treas. Off., File H); Stewart to J. J. S., Apr. ?, 1833 (File I). In an undated letter, probably written the last of May, the Founder presented his conception of an ideal plot: "I suggest the following as in accordance with my own & bro. Hall's views. First, That our School buildings surround the Public square of some 4 or 5 acres—(2) that the Boarding house be located on the South Eastern corner of the Square near to the Mill where I suppose washing will be done by Steam power, churning &c. (3) That the school buildings be on the north Eastern part, & (4.) The Teachers dwelling houses on the Western half leaving room for work shops near the Saw Mill."—J. J. S. to the Board, May (?), 1833 (Treas. Off., File H).

[5]Esther Shipherd to J. J. S., Apr. 8, 1833 (Treas. Off., File H); P. P. Stewart to J. J. S., Apr. [?], 1833 (File I); Oberlin *Evangelist*, Nov. 20, 1861; Rev. David Pease, *Genealogical and Historical Record of the Descendants of John Pease of Enfield, Connecticut* (Springfield—1899), I, 186–198, and Pease to Prudential Committee, Apr. 12, 1852 (Misc. Archives).

[6]Reminiscences of Mrs. Pease at a memorial meeting twenty-five years later as reported in the *Oberlin Evangelist*, Apr. 28, 1858.

the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."[7]

The region still bore very much the aspect of a wilderness when visited a little later by Miss Elmira Collins, companion of the Shipherds and teacher of the infant school in Elyria. She wrote to Mrs. Shipherd: "Since you left us I have been on that ground consecrated by many (I hope, if not *now,* I feel assured it soon will be) to the building of our Redeemer's kingdom. As I rode deliberately along, holding away the branches that too often swept across my bonnet and face, I saw in imagination its future beauty and great glory. And afterwards when I traversed it on foot to search for its more humble buties (viz., knowls, and wild flowers, and small but precious streams), I almost coveted the strength of Samson, to tear up by the roots those mossy trees that so impede its progress; one of which (a sturdy oak) measuring 18 feet two yards from the roots. . . . It has stood there for centuries sister, under the immediate eye of our Heavenly Father who has yearly increased its growth and for what purpose he has decreed from all Eternity; and he knows there is no necessity of a Samson to tear it down. So we will let it rest *patiently.* Five acres were chopped, and the fire seemed quite willing to perform its office, taking hold with all the energy I felt, and never was I more willing it should rage and destroy. You will see days and I hope years of happiness on that ground sister, not withstanding the trials that sometimes rise before you. Two colonists are at br. Stewarts."[8]

After establishing himself and family as the first actual settlers, Pease took charge of the work of clearing under the direction of Addison Tracy of Elyria. By the last of May Redington estimated the number of acres cleared at nearly ten and considered six acres about ready for planting. About the same time Stewart reported to Shipherd: "Two log houses are now erected on the ground, without chimnes. Brother Pease brought a cooking stove along with him from Brownhelm. We have sent off, with a part of Br. James goods, this morning, an 'Oberlin-Stove' [Stewart's own invention] for the other house."[9]

[7]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Apr. 20, 1853.

[8]E. Collins [and E. C. Stewart] to Esther Shipherd, May 11, 1833 (Treas. Off., File B).

[9]E. Redington to J. J. S., May 20, 1833 (Treas. Off., File H), and Stewart to J. J. S., May 21, 25, 1833 (Treas. Off., File I).

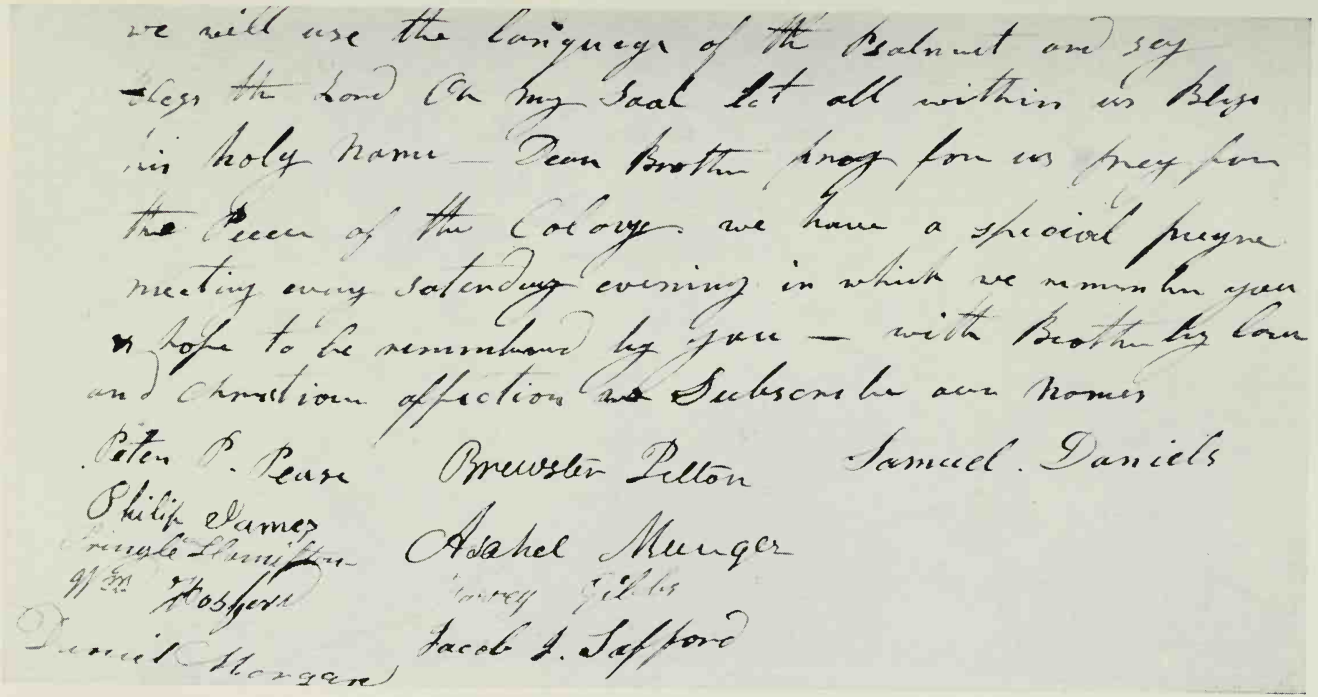
Seven other colonists arrived in this month and were cared for by the Stewarts in Elyria until they could make provision for themselves in Oberlin. They all made a good impression on their host, but he was very doubtful whether they could be persuaded to sustain the founders' notions with regard to abstention from tea and coffee.[10]

On June 11 ten heads of families ("the few Sheep that are collected in Oberlin") addressed a joint letter to Shipherd telling of the progress of the settlement.[11] Through the good pleasure of our God," they declared, "we have been preserved & permitted to set our feet on the Colonial ground & *it is ground,* after all the reports we have heard about water & mud. . . . We fully believe it will sustain the settlement you propose." They reported the beginning of religious services and Sabbath Schools, the extent of clearing (twenty acres chopped, 4 cleared off and two planting, by that date), preparations for raising the boarding house, work on the roads, and the progress in building the steam mill. They concluded: "We will use the language of the Psalmist and say, Bless the Lord, Oh my Soul, let all within us Bless his holy name. Dear Brother pray for us, prey for the Peece of the Colony. We have a special preyre meeting every Saterday evening in which we remember you & hope to be remembered by you."

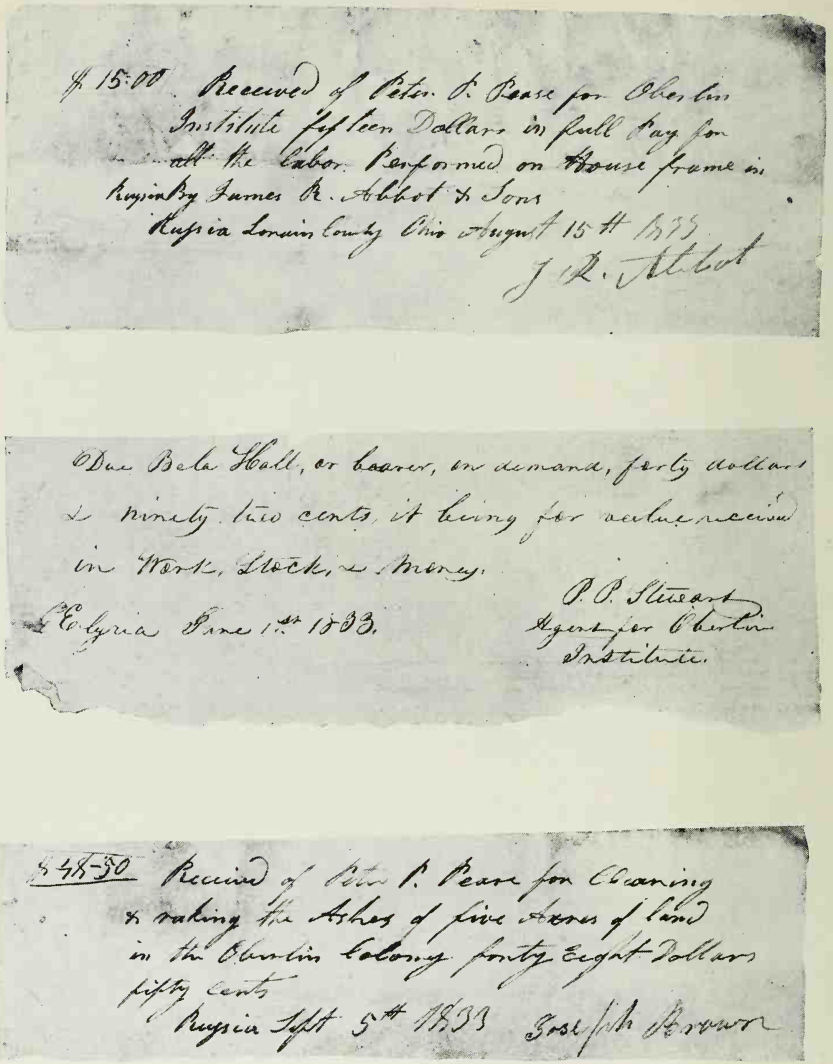
It was in keeping with the pious character of the Founder and the first settlers that religious meetings should have been held from the beginning. On May 19, 1833, Rev. E. J. Leavenworth of Brecksville preached the first sermon ever heard in Oberlin to an audience of fifty persons, made up, of course, largely of farmers from other portions of the township. "Does not this look like a good beginning?" Stewart asked the absent Founder. A local Sabbath School was established and colonists went out almost immediately to found others in the surrounding district. On June 9 two Oberlinites went to Pittsfield and held a meeting and made plans for a school there. A week later a

[10]In his letter of May 21 (Treas. Off., File I) Stewart mentions the names of Ayers, Hall, Gibbs, Morgan and Safford. On the twenty-fifth he adds the names of Daniels, Hosford and James. Redington, writing on July 8, adds to this list the name of Dearborn.—Redington to J. J. S. (Treas. Off., File H). See also E. Redington to J. J. S., May 20, 1833 (File H); Stewart to J. J. S., July 2, 1833 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

[11]P. P. Pease *et al.* to J. J. S., June 11–18, 1833 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).




THE SIGNATURES OF THE OBERLIN COLONISTS TO THE LETTER OF JUNE 11, 1833, ADDRESSED TO SHIPHERD
(The original letter is in the Miscellaneous MSS in the Oberlin College Library.)



$ 15.00 Received of Peter P. Pease for Oberlin Institute fifteen Dollars in full pay for all the labor performed on House frame in Russia By James R. Abbot & Sons
Russia Lorain County Ohio August 15th 1833
J R. Abbot

Due Bela Hall, or bearer, on demand, forty dollars & ninety two cents, it being for value received in Work, Stock, & Money.
Elyria June 1st 1833.
P. P. Stewart
Agent for Oberlin Institute.

$ 48-50 Received of Peter P. Pease for Clearing & raking the Ashes of five Acres of land in the Oberlin Colony forty eight Dollars fifty cents
Russia Sept 5th 1833 Joseph Brown

SOME 1833 RECORDS OF THE OBERLIN COLONY AND INSTITUTE
At the top is a receipt for work performed on the "Boarding House"—Oberlin Hall.
(From originals in the Miscellaneous Archives)

beginning was made at Carlisle. Asahel Munger, one of the colonists, wrote of his activities to Shipherd: "The Lord is among us. We hope his hand is seen in providing a way of access to our beloved neighbors by sabbath school instruction. The school in which Brother Hosford and myself are engaged is 'interesting.' We have payrents and children . . . who are more and more deeply interested every Sabbath." Thus promptly was initiated the task of the conversion of the inhabitants of the "Valley of Moral Death."[12]

Work had been begun in preparation for the combination boarding hall and schoolhouse in the middle of May. The colonists finished hewing the beams at the end of a month; the rest of the lumber had to be brought from Redington's mill at (South) Amherst. It was decided to locate this first frame building opposite the southeastern corner of the square. On July 8 Redington wrote: "If weather will permit we shall raise the house this week."[13] A little slip of brown paper found among the old records of the College gives a clue to the rest of the story. It reads:

> "Received of Peter P. Pease for Oberlin Institute fifteen Dollars in full pay for all the labor Performed on House frame in Russia By James R. Abbot & Sons.
> Russia, Lorain County, Ohio August 15th 1833
> J. R. Abbott"[14]

This "boarding house" was the first institute building, later known as Preparatory Hall and then as Oberlin Hall. When the Shipherds returned from the East in the autumn this was the building in which they lived. It was here also that the first session of the school met on December 3.

In the middle of June all of the colonists turned out to make the roads a bit more passable. An old record shows that five colonists: "Br. Daniels, Br. Hosford, Br. Safford, Br. Morgan,

[12]*Ibid.;* Stewart to Shipherd, May 25, 1833 (Treas. Off., File I), and Asahel Munger to J. J. S., July 30, 1833 (Treas. Off., File F). On Leavenworth's identity see the MS Records of the Domestic Missionary Society of the Western Reserve, 1826–1862, page 42.

[13]E. Redington to J. J. S., May 20, 1833 (Treas. Off., File H); P. P. Stewart to Fayette Shipherd, May 21, 1833, (File I); Mr. and Mrs. Stewart to J. J. S., May 25, 1833; Redington to J. J. S., July 8, 1833 (Treas. Off., File H), and colonists' letter, June 11–18.

[14]In the Misc. Archives.

and Br. Gibbs" with four teams of oxen worked on the road on June 20, 1833.[15]

The failure to provide a sawmill to cut the lumber for the construction work of this first year was a great disappointment to the colonists. This failure seems to have been due to a disagreement between Shipherd and the other trustees as to the size of the engine required for the work. Shipherd had arranged in Buffalo for an eight- to twelve-horsepower steam engine that could have been sent out to Ohio with the opening of navigation in the spring, but Stewart and the others on the ground believed it to be too small. In May the contract for an engine was let by the trustees to Deacon P. B. Andrews, engine-maker of Cleveland and brother-in-law of Charles G. Finney. Work was immediately begun on the mill so that it would be ready as soon as the engine was complete. Redington reported satisfactory progress early in July. A trustees' meeting held at Oberlin on July 11 was largely devoted to construction problems. Two days later Judge Henry Brown wrote to Shipherd regarding this meeting, adding that, "All exertions are made by those present to forward the buildings & also the Steam Engine—But great obstacles are to be encountered in such work at a distance from most of the materials to be used, and over which there is so bad a road."[16]

In October William Hosford went to Cleveland to arrange details for the installment. "I have forwarded all the engine. . . ," he wrote to Redington. "I have engaged a surcular saw . . . that on the whole was thought to be best. The cross cutting Mr. Hudson sed had better be done by hand. The saw and mill irons will be done next weeke." The installation was completed about the first of December. Sawing began in January, 1834, and in the first seven months a quarter-of-a-million feet of lumber was sawed. Late in July the mill-stones for the grist mill were secured,[17] and in August the "Oberlin Steam Mills" were advertised in the Elyria newspaper:

[15]Colonists' letter and "Work done on Highway—1833" in the Misc. Archives.

[16]J. J. S. to the Board, May [?], 1833; E. Redington to J. J. S., May 20, July 8, 1833 (Treas. Off., File H); Stewart to J. J. S., May 25, 1833 (File I), and Brown to J. J. S., July 13, 1833 (File A).

[17]William Hosford to Elephlet Redington [*sic*], Oct. 17, 1833 (Treas. Off., File D); P. B. Andrews to Redington, Dec. 3, 1833 (File A); "Amt. of Sawing from Jany 20, to Agt. 20, 1834," MS (Misc. Archives), and E. P. and E. Sturges, July 17, 1834 (Treas. Off., File I).

"OBERLIN STEAM MILLS

"These Mills are in the Southern part of Russia, Loraine County; eight miles south west from Elyria. The saw mill has been for some months in successful operation, and will saw for customers good white wood logs for one half the lumber, or $3 a thousand; and hard wood at $4 a thousand. The Grist Mill just put in operation will do custom work for the usual toll; and is believed in a manner satisfactory to customers. *Their trial* will be the best test. Flour will also be exchanged for wheat at a fair rate, where customers prefer it to waiting for their own wheat to be ground."[18]

A corn cracker was added to the equipment in December.

The mill seems to have been unsatisfactory and unprofitable from the beginning, however, and the next spring the trustees decided to try to rent it. In 1836 it was sold on time and in 1837 taken back and sold again. Later we find it in the possession of a corporation of students. Eventually it was burned. Deacon Andrews had a hard time getting his pay for the engine and his bill for repairs seems never to have been honored.[19] The steam mill was the first of a series of business failures—but it helped to make possible the cheaper construction of houses and college buildings.

* * *

[18]*Ohio Atlas and Elyria Advertiser,* Aug. 21, 1834. This is the first insertion. Evidently there was some difficulty with the grist mill, for on Nov. 13, 1834, the following advertisement appeared in the same paper:

"OBERLIN STEAM MILL

"These Mills are now in successful operation, and will do custom work as previously advertised. The difficulties in grinding, by which customers were for a season disappointed, have been overcome by a new arrangement, so that good custom work is now uniformly done for the usual toll.

"Flour will also be exchanged for good wheat when customers prefer it to waiting for their own wheat to be ground.

J. J. Shipherd
Agent O. C. Institute

Oberlin, Nov. 8, 1834"

On December 18 another paragraph was added:—

"A corn-cracker has recently been put in operation for grinding corn in the ear for provender. Also a Rolling Screen for cleansing wheat."

[19]T. M., May 29, 1835, Feb. 11, 1836; P. C. M., Dec. 31, 1836, Sept. 14, 1837; "The Agents' report, Sept. 5, 1837 (Misc. Archives)"; P. B. Andrews to Gillett, June 1, 1836 (Treas. Off., File A), and Andrews to H. Hill, July 9, 1845 (Misc. Archives).

Shipherd required prospective colonists to sign a covenant. It began:

"Lamenting the degeneracy of the Church and the deplorable condition of our perishing world, and ardently desirous of bringing both under the entire influence of the blessed gospel of peace; and viewing with peculiar interest the influence which the valley of the Mississippi must exert over our nation and the nations of the earth; and having, as we trust, in answer to devout supplication, been guided by the counsel of the Lord: The undersigned Covenant together under the name of the Oberlin Colony, subject to the following regulations, which may be amended by a concurrence of two-thirds of the colonists:

"1. Providence permitting, we engage as soon as practicable to remove to the Oberlin Colony, in Russia, Lorain County, Ohio, and there fix our residence, for the express purpose of glorifying God and doing good to men to the extent of our ability."

The compact further bound the colonists to "as perfect a community of interest as though we held a community of property," all surpluses above "necessary personal or family expenses" to be appropriated for the spread of the Gospel. They were also required to "eat only plain and wholesome food," renounce "all bad habits,—especially the smoking, chewing and snuffing of tobacco, unless it is necessary as a medicine, . . . all strong and unnecessary drinks, even tea and coffee, as far as practicable, . . . all the world's expensive and unwholesome fashions of dress, particularly tight dressing [or lacing] and ornamental attire," and to "observe plainness and durability in [the construction of their] houses, furniture, [and] carriages." They undertook also to "provide for the widowed, orphans, sick and all the needy," "to educate all [their] children thoroughly, and . . . train them up in body, intellect, and heart, for the service of *God*," to support the Oberlin Institute, and "make special efforts to sustain the institution of the Gospel at home and among [their] neighbors."

The covenant concludes:

"We will strive to maintain deep-toned and elevated personal piety, to provoke each other to love and good works, to live together in all things as brethren, and to glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are His.

"In testimony of our fixed purpose thus to do, in humble reliance on divine grace, we hereunto affix our names."[20]

Of course, the covenant contained nothing with regard to the authority for, nor means of, the government of the colony. In the first year (1833), however, the colonists met in general mass-meeting to determine matters of common interest, without any written documents to guide them.[21] All of the known meetings took place after the return of Shipherd: three in October, one in November, and one in December.

These meetings dealt with the usual pioneer problems: the surveying and clearing of land, roads, postal service and education. At the first meeting it was voted to "purchase 50 acres or more and hold the same as a parsonage . . . at the corner opposite the North East corner of the publick Square." A committee was chosen to supervise the clearing of this parsonage lot. As to roads: it was voted "that the Colonists shall bear an equal proportion in the purchase of land for public roads, according to the number of acres which each Colonist shall have taken." At the meeting of October 22 the secretary was directed to petition for a post office. A week later it was provided that a committee should be designated "to examine the land in regard to school Districts & take measures to form a district."

Even at the first meeting, however, there seems to have been some doubt in the minds of some of the settlers whether they possessed the authority to deal with these questions as a self-constituted commonwealth within the sovereign State of Ohio. Shipherd, Stewart and a third colonist were chosen a committee "to ascertain what the law is respecting incorporated societies in Ohio and draft a petition in accordance with said law to the Legislature of this State, for an act of incorporation for the Oberlin Colony." At the last meeting of the year, two days before Christmas, the petition, drawn up by this committee, was

[20]MS Covenant of Oberlin Colony, etc. (Including society minutes for 1837) in the Library of Oberlin College. Lois Kimball Mathews, "The Mayflower Compact and its Descendants" in the *Proceedings* of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association for the year 1912–1913 (Cedar Rapids, Iowa—1913), VI, 79–106. Apparently the covenant was first printed in the *Oberlin Evangelist, Extra,* Apr. 1, 1840. It is a slightly different version. See also Robert S. Fletcher, "The Government of the Oberlin Colony," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review,* XX, 179–190 (Sept., 1933).

[21]MS Minutes of the Oberlin Society (or "Oberlin Colonists"), Oct. 15, 22, 29; Nov. 5 and Dec. 23, 1833 (Misc. Archives).

presented to the assembled colonists, adopted, and ordered to be sent to the legislature. "To the honorable the Genl. Assembly of the State of Ohio," begins the original draft. "Your Petitioners, recent emigrants from New York & New England & now residents in Russia, Lorain Co, & forming [a] settlement called the Oberlin Colony, humbly pray that they may as pious & good citizens be privileged with the following Charter."[22] The charter proposed was similar to that usually granted to church societies, which wished to be incorporated in order that they might legally hold property. As passed by the legislature the word "Presbyterian" was inserted and the act entitled *An Act to incorporate the Oberlin Presbyterian Society of Russia in the county of Lorain*.[23] There was no debate with regard to its adoption as it seems generally to have been accepted as just another of the many incorporations of church societies. But it was used, albeit with some misgivings, as the basis of self-government for the Oberlin Colony.

The charter provided that the first meeting of the incorporated society should take place on "the 2d Monday of March, 1834." Accordingly the colonists were convened on March 10 but did no business except to select a chairman and a secretary and adjourn until the next day. On the eleventh, however, a committee was appointed to draft a "constitution." This constitution was reported and adopted on April 2. It forms the third element in the triple basis of Oberlin colony government. The covenant contained the creed; the charter granted authority, and the constitution provided the governmental machinery. The preamble strikes a characteristic note: "Whereas we, the members of the Oberlin Presbyterian Society, for the glory of God, by holding up the light of Heaven before the eyes of the millions, inhabiting this extensive region; as individuals, and as a religious and corporate boddy, for the better attainment of this great object, for our mutual benefit (the reasons for our locating in this vally) do adopt the following rules or constitution."[24] Various offices were created (clerk, treasurer and three trustees) and their duties defined. Regular annual meetings and special meetings

[22]The petition is in the Miscellaneous Archives.

[23]*Acts of the State of Ohio* (Chillicothe, Zanesville, and Columbus, 1803–), *Local*, XXXII (1834), 227–28.

[24]MS Constitution of the Oberlin Society, etc. (Including Minutes of 1834, 1835 and 1836) in the Library of Oberlin College.

called on six days' notice by the trustees were provided for, and the method of amendment determined.

At first only twenty-nine persons mentioned in the act of incorporation seem to have taken part in the meetings but in this summer of 1834 it was voted, "That all colonists of Oberlin are at liberty to act with those whoos names are mentioned in the charter of this Society in there affairs as a Society for the present."[25] Thus it appears that, as in 1833, all questions of importance continued to be discussed and voted upon by the adult male colonists in open mass meeting. In 1837, however, the constitution was radically revised, a board of seven directors being established at that time.[26] These directors were elected annually, and seem to have corresponded to the selectmen of New England town government. The electors, who were defined as "such male persons of legal age as by a vote of the board of directors hereinafter created shall be received and shall subscribe with their own hands to the articles of this constitution," chose the directors and possessed the sole right of authorizing taxes.

General meetings of colonists were held fairly often from March of 1834 through 1837. The distribution of land, the laying out of streets and the building of roads continued to occupy much of the time in these meetings. On December 1, 1835, a committee was appointed "to prepare a draft for the village of Oberlin and have it recorded or deposited in the county clerk's office according to law." The original map authorized at that time and attested by two members of the committee and showing lots and the names of owners in 1835 is now in the Oberlin College Library. The subject of roads was later taken up on several different occasions.[27] A piece of ground for the interment of the dead was secured from the trustees of the Institute and, in the following year, a fence was ordered built around it. A sexton was appointed and his duties defined: "The business of the sexton is, to dig graves, prepare a hearse if nessisary, see to tolling the bell and keep an account of same."[28]

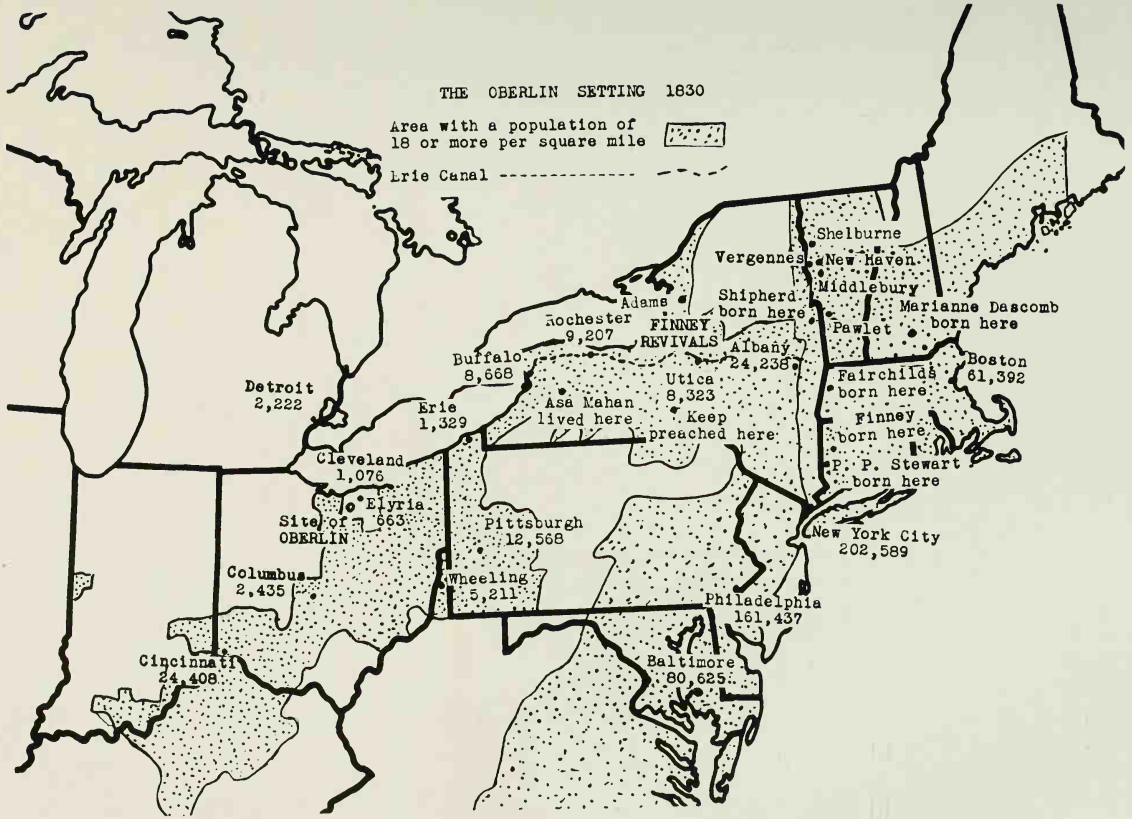
A considerable variety of matters was dealt with from time to time, such matters as would come before the legislative organ

[25]Constitution, etc., Minutes for June 5, 1834.
[26]*Ibid.*, Apr. 25, 1837.
[27]*Ibid.*, Nov. 27, 1834, and Mar. 3, 1835. The map is reproduced in W. H. Phillips, *Oberlin Colony* (Oberlin—1933), 21.
[28]*Ibid.*, Minutes for Apr. 10, Dec. 1, 1835, and June 1, 1836.

of any frontier community. A committee was appointed to plan for the building of a schoolhouse. A resolution was passed, "that we disapprove of permitting swine to run at large."[29] At the meeting of May 26, 1836, an official seal was adopted. It is described in the minutes. "The letter o, of an inch in diameter. Within this letter a fruit tree full of fruit. This represents what this society should be as a boddy and as individuals, a tree indeed yielding the peaceable fruits of righteousness." Only five years after the first successful operation of a steam locomotive in England and eight years after the chartering of the Baltimore and Ohio the Oberlin Society was considering the possibility of building a railroad. On March 3, 1835, it was "Resolved . . . That T. S. Inger [soll], J. B. Hall, D. B. Kenny be a committee to explore the rout from this place to the mouth of Black River, and ascertain if possible whether it will be practicable to petition for a rail road from here to that place." In April of 1837, "The committee appointed to consider the expediency of establishing a Bank presented their report—accepted and ordered to be laid on the table." No bank was established.

Part of the time of several meetings was devoted to the enforcement of the letter and spirit of the Covenant. It is quite clear that from the beginning Shipherd hoped to eliminate all worldly, economic motives from the minds of the colonists. Speculation in land in one form or another was little short of a mania among Americans of this period. The desire to make profits from this source was a dominant motive for westward migration. Eventually there appeared some in Oberlin who desired to sell their farms for more than they had paid for them. In the minutes of the meeting of January 29, 1835, we read: "Resolved . . . That the conduct of Mr. Townly in disposeing of land in Oberlin Colony with the obvious intention of Speculation, is unjust and contrary to the spirit and intention of the Colonists who have setled at Oberlin,—that we mark such conduct with our entire disaprobation." In 1837 resolutions were offered and adopted: "That those who hold lands in this colony and have not aided in building up the Institution and improving the roads are not in equity entitled to the rises in their value," and "That to hold more land than one is able to improve or designs immediately

[29]Constitution, etc., Minutes for Jan. 29, 1835, and May 9, 1835. Where not otherwise stated, statements in regard to society meetings are from this source.




(Prepared by the author on a United States Department of Agriculture base map)

to improve is inconsistent with the welfare of the institution and is therefore a breach of good faith and of the Oberlin Covenant."[30] Holding land unused and unimproved was "inconsistent with the welfare of the institution," ie. the Oberlin Collegiate Institute, because such a practice would reduce the opportunities for manual labor available to students.

In the same year, which seems to have been one especially devoted to the revival of the Founding Spirit, it was "Resolved that it is a gross violation of the Oberlin Covenant as well as of the sacred scriptures, to receive any increase of our poor brethren for moneys lent them." There was always a tendency towards communism in the Oberlin colony enterprise, and in 1837, during this re-study of basic principles, it came to the fore. A resolution was introduced but voted down, "That it is not only expedient but the duty of this Church in order to become holy to put all their property into a common stock fund, having all things common and thus comply with the *requisitions* of the gospel and the examples of the primitive Christians."[31]

Also in 1837 efforts were made to uphold the fifth article against "all bad habits": "Resolved, that the use of Tobacco, is inconsistent with the principles of the Institution and the Gospel, and is a breach of the Oberlin Covenant—and that we deem it our duty not to patronize any Inn Keeper or merchant in Oberlin who will vend those articles."[32] At a later meeting a similar resolution was passed with regard to tea and coffee.

The Oberlin Colonists seem to have been very certain that they were making history, for at five different meetings resolutions were passed for the collection of historical material.

Though, after its organization in the summer of 1834, the Oberlin Church held regular business meetings, the colonial society also dealt with some church matters. This failure to discriminate between ecclesiastical and civil government is, of course, a natural Puritan inheritance. On April 21, 1834, a resolution was even introduced, "that money be raised by levying a tax upon land for the support of the Minister." The resolution

[30]Covenant of Oberlin Colony (Including some minutes of the Oberlin Society for 1837), Minutes for July 4, 1837.

[31]*Ibid.*, Minutes for July 21, and Aug. 11, 1837. The use of the term "church" here is anomalous, though it is significant as showing the indefiniteness of the boundary between the civil and the ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

[32]*Ibid.*, Minutes for Aug. 26, 1837.

was voted down unanimously. At another meeting of the colonists (March 1, 1836) one of their members was selected to "Seat the Congregation." In the spring of 1835 a motion was made to change the organization into a purely ecclesiastical society, but was defeated.[33]

It is probable that many of the activities of the Oberlin Society were illegal under the act of incorporation of 1834. This was suspected by some at a very early date,[34] and in the autumn of the same year a petition was presented to the Ohio legislature, "Praying that all that part of the Township of Russia in the county of Lorain, included within the following boundaries . . . be incorporated by the name of *Oberlin* Colony, with all and *singular,* the rights, powers, and privileges of a corporate Town and Village . . . "[35] A bill of incorporation was passed by the Senate in December but, after consideration in January, it was indefinitely postponed by the House in February of 1835. In the spring of 1836 the matter was taken up again in a meeting of the colonists and it was ordered "that a committee be appointed to prepare a Charter to be forwarded to [the] legislature for the incorporation of Oberlin as a Village."[36] This petition received consideration in the State Senate early in the following year. Incorporation was denied by a vote of 24 to 3.

It was not until 1846 that the village of Oberlin was regularly incorporated. In the interval between 1841 and that date there seems to have been an interregnum in local government, for the Society was, in that period, occupied entirely with the building of the meeting house. The only visible agency of local government from 1841 to 1846 was Russia Township.[37] After the incorporation of Oberlin Village in 1846 the form of its government became exactly like that of hundreds of other Ohio towns.

[33]Constitution, etc., Minutes for Mar. 3, 1835.

[34]*Ibid.,* Oct. 30, 1834.

[35]Notice signed by a "Committee of Oberlin" in the *Ohio Atlas and Elyria Advertiser,* Oct. 31, 1834, and later issues.

[36]*Ohio State Journal and Columbus Gazette,* Mar. 3, 1837; Ohio Senate *Journal,* Dec. 20, 23, 1834; Feb. 27, 1837, and Ohio House *Journal,* Jan. 16, 17; Feb. 26, 1835.

[37]In this connection it should be noted that church members were disciplined (excommunicated, fined, etc.) by their brethren sitting as a court of justice for civil as well as ecclesiastical errors: dishonesty in business, immorality, etc. See below, pages 580–581.

## CHAPTER XI

# *OBERLIN INSTITUTE*

THE embryonic scheme for a manual labor school was maturing in Shipherd's mind as he discussed it with educators in the East. In the spring of 1833, he reviewed the experience at the Oneida Institute with George W. Gale, conferred with Samuel Read Hall at Andover and, in August, had an interview at Boston with William Woodbridge, editor of the *American Annals of Education* and apostle of Fellenberg.[1] He had had, of course, the benefit of counsel with John Monteith in Elyria from the beginning.

The original plan included only an academic school — one that would prepare for college. As Shipherd talked with various people, however, he was persuaded of the necessity of adding a collegiate course and, eventually, also a theological department. Rumors of this extension in plans came to Stewart and, in May of 1833, he wrote to Shipherd and to his brother, Fayette, protesting against such an ambitious scheme, which was certain, he felt, to lead to disappointment. He insisted that "a common manual labour school, a female seminary, & a system of labour connected with that also" was enough to start with.[2]

Before either of these letters could have reached him Shipherd wrote to Stewart with regard to the expanded program:

"You perceive in my recent communications that I have latterly enlarged our plans of opperation, & it may seem to you unadvisedly, but, I trust the following reasons will satisfy you all. (1) The manual labor system requires that the student be carried through his whole course. If the Institution be a mere preparatory school for college, the students are always mere apprentices in Manual Labor; & the benefits of the system are realized but in small degree. Should we fit them for College only,

[1]Shipherd to Eliphalet Redington, May 1, 1833 (Treas. Off., File A), and Aug. 9, 1833 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

[2]Stewart to F. Shipherd, May 21, 1833, and to J. J. Shipherd, May 25, 1833 (Treas. Off., File I).

there is no institution to which we could send them, where the Manual Labor facilities would be continued equal to Oberlin. Hudson [Western Reserve College], for want of land, can never render the Manual labor of the students extensively productive for their support. The Lane Seminary has, and can have but little land, & is full, & will be full without our students. Moreover, the Principal of the Oneida Institute assured me that a large farm was indispensible to great success in extensive opperations; & that the student shd be carried through his whole course. Again, The making of our Sem'y. equal to an Academy, College & Theo. Sem'ry. will not at all curtail the usefulness of Hudson & others; for if we will furnish such advantages as I propose, students will fill our sem'y. who wd. never enter those now in existence. The revivals of three years past have brot. hundreds of youth into our churches who desire to be educated for the ministry & other useful services, who will not incur debt necessary in such a course as they must pursue at any Institute now in being in our country. This I know from actual conference with youth in the east. Hundreds of promising youth will doubtless be educated for God's service or not educated, as we shall or shall not provide them the means of complete education by their own industry & economy. . . . Let us therefore begin with the Academic, & as Providence permit grow into the Collegiate & Theological, which, I doubt not, will be as fast as our students shall advance in their studies."[3]

The difference in the makeup of these two men is nowhere so clearly brought out as in this controversy. Stewart, himself, wrote a little later: "I think we may balance each other & become mutual helps. If you should occasionally feel a little impatience at my *moderation,* & I, with your *impetuosity,* It would not be strange. But if we are always in the exercise of that charity which 'hopeth all things' it will be well at the last."[4]

In the prospectus drawn up by Shipherd and printed in various periodicals in the early autumn of 1833 his most ambitious plans were incorporated. It is the first official announcement of the Institute:

"The plan of this Seminary was projected in July, 1832. It owes its origin to the following facts. The growing millions of

[3]J. J. S. to Stewart, May 28, 1833 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).
[4]Stewart to Shipherd, July 2, 1833 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

the Mississippi Valley are perishing through want of well qualified ministers and teachers, and the Great Head of the Church has latterly inclined multitudes of youth to preach his gospel, and train the rising generation for his service; but his people have not yet adequately provided for their education. In view of these facts the founders of the Oberlin Institute, having waited on God for counsel, and being encouraged by the wise and good, resolved to rise and build. Having surveyed the West till prepared to select the most eligible site for this Institution, they resolved to locate it in Russia, Lorain County, Ohio, eleven miles south of Black River Port on Lake Erie. That situation is easy of access to youth from the East, who have the following inducements to go thither for education, if they design to labor in the West when qualified.

"They can there acquire as thorough an education as in the East, and at far less expense; they can be much more useful during their course of study, and an acquaintance with western character, formed by personal intercourse, will better prepare them for moulding that character when they shall enter upon professional service. This Seminary thus located, is also surrounded by 100,000 inhabitants, greatly needing its benefits. Its site is upon 500 acres of land given as a permanent farm by the owners of the town in which it is located; and in the midst of 5,000 acres to be occupied by a colony of the most valuable eastern families that can be obtained; some of which have already removed, and there fixed their residence, for the express purpose of sustaining this Seminary and otherwise glorifying God and doing good to men, to the extent of their ability.

"The grand (but not exclusive) objects of the Oberlin Institute, are the education of gospel ministers and pious schoolteachers. To fit them thoroughly for their important services, they will be furnished with academic, collegiate, and theological privileges. . . .

"The system of education in this Institution will provide for the body and heart as well as the intellect; for it aims at the best education of the *whole man*. The Manual Labor Department will receive unusual attention, being not, (as is too common) regarded as an unimportant appendage to the literary department; but systematized and incorporated with it. A variety of agricultural and mechanical labors will be performed by the

students under circumstances most conducive to their health and support. *All will be required to work* probably four hours daily. . . .

"This Institution is also to have a Female Department, on the Manual Labor Plan, for the same reasons that it is adopted in the Male Department. Housekeeping, the manufacture of wool, the culture of silk, the appropriate parts of gardening, particularly raising and fitting seeds for the market, the making of clothes, &c; will furnish them employment suited to their sex, and conducive to their health, good habits, and support.

"There will be in connection with this Seminary, Infant and Primary Departments of instruction under the general supervision of the President, that the architect who rears the superstructure may lay well the cornerstone. The primary departments will be established and sustained at the expense of the Oberlin Colony, by which the Institute is embosomed.

"This work is in successful progress, and Providence permitting, the academic course of instruction will be commenced on the 1st of December next; and the higher department be opened as soon as the advance of the students shall require them."[5]

In December the school was to open, but early in October unwelcome news was received from Seth Waldo, who had been appointed to take Hall's place as head of the school until the autumn of 1834. "The next Tuesday after you left Andover," he informed Shipherd, "I was taken with bilious fever, with which I was brought to the borders of the grave. . . ." In short, he would be unable to go west until his health was recovered, probably not before the next spring.[6] He recommended the hiring of a temporary substitute. The man selected as the first teacher was John Frederick Scovill, a sophomore at Western Reserve College, and a native of Fort Edward, New York, a town perhaps thirty miles from Shipherd's own Granville.[7] At the eleventh hour he definitely promised to come: "Providence seems

[5]*New York Evangelist,* Sept. 7, 1833, and *Ohio Atlas and Elyria Advertiser,* Oct. 17, 1833. It is known that it was also printed in the *New York Observer* and the *Boston Recorder.*

[6]Waldo to Shipherd, Oct. 7, 1833 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

[7]Auburn Theological Seminary, *General Biographical Catalogue,* 66. On Nov. 27, 1833, the Western Reserve faculty granted Scovill "leave of absence to teach temporarily at Oberlin."—Information from Faculty Minutes in letter from Dr. Frederick Waite to Sec. George M. Jones, Nov. 9, 1935. Scovill later studied at Union College and Auburn Seminary.

to say 'Go to Oberlin!!' therefore you may expect me ('Deo Volente'), on the spot next week on Saturday. You must not expect as much from me, as from an experienced hand, as I have taught but little. But I will not however present a long list of excuses. Looking to God for assistance, I shall endeavor to discharge the duties imposed upon me, according to the best of my ability. May heaven bless us, in all our undertakings."[8]

So the school was opened on schedule. The Founder wrote shortly after to his parents:

"The Lord is to be praised that we were enabled to open our Institution at the appointed time Dec. 3d — & with 30 scholars. [This does not include the twenty youngsters in the 'infant school'.] We have now 34 boarding scholars & expect 40 for the winter. Applicants are without number, from Lake Erie to the Gulf of Mexico — from Lower Canada to Long Island Sound, & from Michigan to the Atlantic. The scholars study & work well. Five minutes after the Manual Labor Bell strikes the hammers, saws &c. of the mechanical students wake all around us; & the axe men in the woods breaking the 'ribs of nature' make all crash.

"Nearly all our visitors (& they are not few) express surprise that so great a work has been wrought here in so short a time. God be praised!

"I feel as I said in my sleep the other night — 'Oberlin will rise & the Devil cannot hinder it'!"[9]

The school met in the "boarding house," the one and only frame building in the colony. Only 35 feet by 44 feet and two and a half stories high, this structure also housed the Stewart and Shipherd families and all of the boarding pupils, and contained a common dining room and office![10] Round about it, like chickens round a brooding hen, were scattered the rude log cabins of the colonists, most of them on what is now South Main Street. On the banks of Plumb Creek stood the communal mill, not yet in operation. There were a few acres of stubble land which had been planted to wheat in the previous summer. Probably

[8]Scovill to Shipherd, Nov. 20, 1833 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

[9]J. J. S. to Zebulon R. Shipherd, Dec. 13, 1833 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

[10]T. M. Sept. 13, 1833, and J. J. S. to Z. R. Shipherd Dec. 13 and 14, 1833 (O. C. Lib., Misc. MSS). There is an interesting account of the Oberlin Hall Boarding House by Mrs. Stewart in the *Oberlin Review,* XI, 126–127 (Feb. 16, 1884).

a larger area was occupied by stumps. Oberlin had created as yet but a small breach in the wilderness; in the first year venison was often included in the fare. The dense, virgin forest was still close upon the little settlement in December, but was being slowly driven back by the daily assaults of the colonists and students, armed with broad axes, beetles and wedges. The acrid smoke from the burning logs and brush hung over the clearing almost constantly.

Scovill wrote to an acquaintance two weeks after school had opened:

"My location at present . . . is at 'Oberlin', up to my eyes in business. Almost 40 Young Gentlemen & Ladies are under my care, *all* looking up to me for counsel & instruction. They possess minds too of a rare quality, & demand the utmost efforts from a teacher to store them with that rich science, heavenly as well as earthly, which will prepare them to act successfully & usefully their parts upon the theatre of life. . . . The Colonists now on the ground, are men of sterling piety & talents — majority of them from the land of steady habits. . . . Most of the Young men *clear their way,* by engaging in Manual Labor 4 hours per day. The grand object of this Institution is to educate those who shall be prepared physically, as well as intellectually & morally, to illuminate the world with the light of Science & civilization."[11]

Eliza Branch taught the "infant school" and attended the academic course. For her first seventeen weeks of service in this capacity she received $2.50 per week. "Our little ones" wrote Shipherd, "H.[enry] W.[illiam] & E.[dward] are in the Institute's primary Department. E. Branch Teacher." She lived with the Shipherds in the "boarding house" and in the spring of 1834 in their new log cabin, where she performed her four hours of daily manual labor, being Esther Shipherd's only assistant in caring for a family of sixteen, including boarders.[12]

At the meeting of September 13 the trustees had provided for the drafting of an act of incorporation for the school, and the Oberlin Society appointed a committee on October 15 to cooperate in the preparation of the document and an accompany-

[11]J. F. Scovill to William J. Edwards, Dec. 17, 1833 (Original in possession of Mrs. Wells L. Griswold, of Youngstown, Ohio).

[12]Eliza Branch, Account with O. C. Institute, 1833–34 (Misc. Archives); J. J. Shipherd to Z. R. Shipherd, Dec. 13, 1833, *Loc. Cit.,* and J. J. Shipherd to Fayette Shipherd, June 14, 1834 (Shipherd MSS).

...t accounts.

Trust no man's appearances—they are ... perhaps assumed for the purpose of obtaining. Beware of a gaudy exterior; rogues usually dress The rich are plain men. Trust him, if any one, carries little upon his back. Never trust him who flies into a passion on being dunned; make him pay quickly, if there be any virtue in the law.

For the New York Observer.

## OBERLIN COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE.

The plan of this Seminary was projected in July 1832. It owes its origin to the following facts. The growing millions of the Mississippi Valley are perishing through want of well qualified ministers and school teachers; and the great Head of the church has latterly inclined multitudes of youth to preach his Gospel, and train the rising generation for his service; but his people have not yet adequately provided for their education. In view of these facts the founders of the Oberlin Institute, having waited on God for counsel, and being encouraged by the wise and good, resolved to rise and build. Having surveyed the West till prepared to select the most eligible site for this institution, they resolved to locate it in Russia, Lorain county, Ohio, eleven miles south from Black River Port on Lake Erie. That situation is easy of access to youth from the East, who have the following inducements to go thither for education, if they design to labor in the West when qualified.

They can there acquire as thorough an education as in the east, and at far less expense; they can be much more useful during their course of study; and an acquaintance with western character, formed by personal intercourse, will better prepare them for moulding that character when they shall enter upon professional service. This Seminary thus located, is also surrounded by 100,000 inhabitants greatly needing its benefits. Its site is upon 500 acres of good land given as a permanent farm by the owners of the town in which it is located; and in the midst of 5,000 acres to be occupied by a colony of the most valuable eastern families that can be obtained; some of which have already removed, and there fixed their residence, for the express purpose of sustaining this Seminary and otherwise glorifying God and doing good to men to the extent of their ability.

The grand (but not exclusive) objects of the Oberlin Institute, are the education of Gospel ministers and pious school teachers. To fit them thoroughly for their important services, they will be furnished with academic, collegiate, and theological privileges, inclusive of those peculiar to a Teacher's Seminary, like the one at Andover, Massachusetts.

The *time* of study requisite for the ministry and school teaching is not fixed, but *thorough qualifications* for these services must be acquired before a diploma can be obtained.

While most of the students in this Seminary will be youth, special provision will be made for those who are more advanced in life when they commence their studies.

The system of education in this Institute will provide for the *body* and *heart* as well as the *intellect*; for it aims at the best education of the *whole man*. The Manual Labor Department will receive unusual attention, being not, (as is too common) regarded as an unimportant appendage to the literary department; but systematized and incorporated with it. A variety of agricultural, horticultural, and mechanical labors will be performed by the students under circumstances most conducive to their health and support. *All will be required to labor* probably four hour daily. They will be boarded at cost (which will be very low and paid by the hour according to their individual earning An experiment will be made of only one term in a year of about forty weeks; for a *daily vacation* of ... lar exercise, will render ... vacations ... and during ...

FIRST PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE OBERLIN COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

(Published in the autumn of 1833 in the *New York Evangelist, New York Observer, Boston Recorder* and *Ohio Atlas and Elyria Advertiser.*)

ELIZA BRANCH

Who taught the infant school in 1833–34. She later married George Clark, a Lane Rebel.

(From a miniature in the possession of Margaret K. Parsons, Gloversville, New York)

ing petition.[13] On December 23 this petition was reported to the society and adopted. As originally drawn up and signed by the trustees the charter provided for an "Institute . . . on a plan sufficiently extensive to afford instruction in the liberal arts & Sciences," which might be later extended to include "additional departments for the study of such other branches as they may think necessary or useful."

The petition which accompanied the charter is a significant document, a first report of progress, adopted, as it was, less than three weeks after the opening of school:

"The foregoing charter your petitioners respectfully solicit for reasons following

"1.) Institutions like this which we pray you to incorporate are indispensable to the general diffusion of Science & virtue which are the basis of our free & valued institutions.

"2.) Altho' litterary institutions have been considerably multiplyed in our infant Republic, none have yet afforded its indigent youth in general an opportunity to acquire a liberal and thorough education by their own industry. This extension of the benefits of liberal education to the whole community is yet a desideratum.

"3.) Your Petitioners believe that this grand object desired by every enlightened patriot may be secured by the plan which they have adopted & in part executed which is as follows to wit[:]

"They have secured by donation 500 acres of good land in its native State — have cleared & sown about 30 Acres of the same . . . have erected a Steam Engine of 25 horse power which is [soon to be?] propelling a Saw Mill & is soon to propell a grist mill & other machinery — have erected a building for a boarding & school house which will accomodate 40 boarding scholars and have secured funds in addition to the amount of about 6000 dollars, which a generous public are continually increasing.

"They opened an Academic School on the 3d of Dec. inst with 30 Scholars which are increasing as fast as the accomodations of your petitioners will permit: & would now have been at least 100 could your petitioners have made room for them. They have elected a President [Hall] & two Professors [Waldo and Dascomb] which are expected to enter upon their official services during the ensuing year & have applications for admission to this

[13]Minutes of the Oberlin Society, Oct. 15, and Dec. 23, 1833 (Misc. Archives).

seminary from Mishigan to the Atlantic & from Lake Erie & L. [ower] Canada to the Gulph of Mexico & Long Island Sound.

. . . . . .

"No permanent fund is required in the O.C.I. for the support of its Prest & Professors for men of best qualifications have been found & it is believed will be found as they shall be needed, whose pecuniary compensation will be only so much as a moderate tuition will furnish. Students are furnished with board and all its appendages at cost, & are required to labor 4 hours daily for which they receive all that their labor can be made to produce from 500 acres of good land & an engine of 25 horse power with a variety of machinery."[14]

A charter of the usual type and quite dissimilar in wording from the Oberlin draft was granted by the Ohio legislature on February 28, 1834, and authorized the trustees to hold their first legal meeting on the second Monday of March, 1834.[15]

When the trustees assembled for their first meeting under the charter on March 10, 1834, Shipherd had already prepared a broadside, reporting that "our most sanguine expectations have been hitherto more than realized, . . . embosomed by the Oberlin Colony, which consists of pious Eastern families that have removed to this Valley for the purpose of Glorifying God, . . . this Institution is beginning to diffuse the cheering beams of Christian Science," where "less than one year since was the darkness of a deep Ohio forest without inhabitant." There were at this time sixty students in attendance: forty in the academic department and twenty in the primary school.[16]

The success or failure of manual labor was looked upon as a test of the whole institution and Shipherd proudly boasted of it: "The avails from the students have by their four hours daily labor paid their board, fuel, lights, washing and mending. Some have added to this, payment for their books—others still more—and a few have, by this exercise necessary to health, earned their clothing also; and thus supported themselves without retarding their progress in study. . . . The females have generally paid

[14]The draft of "An Act to Incorporate the Oberlin Collegiate Institute" and the petition are in the Miscellaneous Archives.

[15]*Laws of Ohio* (1834), pages 226–227, and *General Catalogue of Oberlin College*, 1833–1908, Int. 13–14.

[16]*Circular—Oberlin Collegiate Institute*, Mar. 8, 1834—also printed in the *Ohio Atlas and Elyria Advertiser*, Apr. 10, 1834.

their board with its appendages by housekeeping—Some their board, and tuition also, while younger ones have fallen short of earning their board."

In order to furnish manual labor for the men and milk for all the students a small herd of cattle was purchased. On April 15 one cow had been secured,[17] and, on November 1, 1833, Shipherd "in behalf of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute" entered into an agreement with R. H. Foote of Wellington whereby the latter promised to "deliver, at Oberlin on the 1st day of April, 1834 or sooner if requested by the said . . . Shipherd . . . eleven of his cows heretofore called by him & his family by the following names—& their calves also: Big Brown Cow—Old Bragy —Campbel Cow—Scrawney—Scrawneys Mate—Fire Brains—Bradley Cow—Hamilton Cow—Bell Cow—Hollow Horns & Brown White Face." The price was $165.00 and "It is further agreed by the parties aforesaid that the said Foot[e] shall take as good care of the said cows at his own cost till delivered as aforesaid as if they were his own & that the said Oberlin Committee of the second part shall risk the lives, health & casualties of the cows, & the said Foot[e] warrants the cows to be with calf." Of course, there were no good meadows as yet on the colony land so that it was necessary to rent a meadow in order that "Big Brown Cow," "Scrawney," "Fire Brains" and all the others might have forage. The subsequent history of the cattle is told in a rough account kept by Shipherd on a slip of scrap paper:

| | |
|---|---|
| Bot of Foot[e] | 11 cows |
| | 1 Daniels [sold to?] |
| | 10 |
| | 1 Died |
| | 9 |
| | 1 Purchased |
| | 10 |
| | 1 Black & white cow of P. P. Pease |
| | 11 |
| | 1 Deep red cow Purch[d] by J. J. Ship[d][18] |
| | 12 |

[17]First day-book of the Oberlin Institute (1833–35), entry for Apr. 19, 1833.
[18]The contracts and memo are in the Miscellaneous Archives.

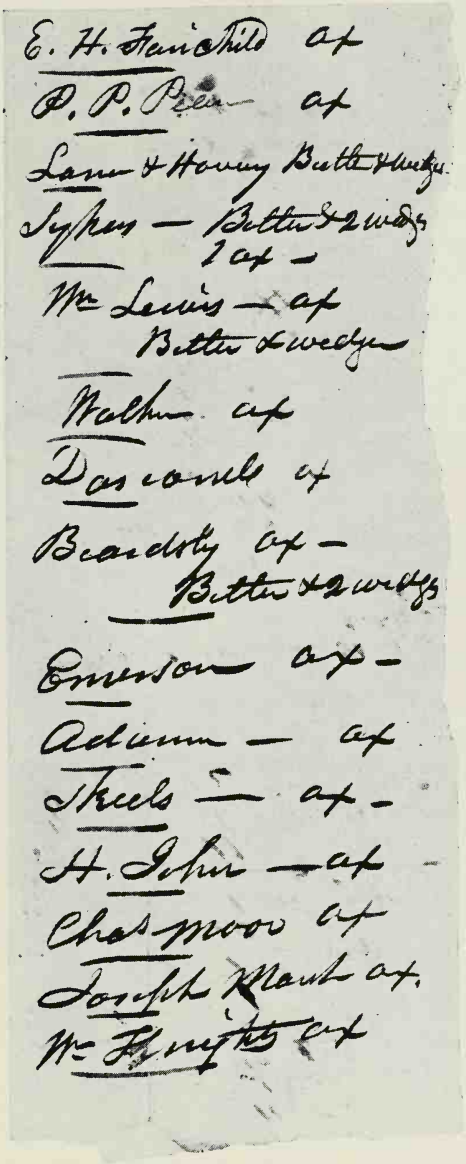
The circular of March, 1834, states that at that time the Institute possessed "three yoke of oxen—twelve cows—fifty sheep." During the summer and fall students were paid $54.51 for milking cows.[19]

In addition, the forest offered in the first years an unlimited opportunity for work of the most laborious kind. On the reverse of Shipherd's memorandum in regard to the history of the cows is a record of tools lent to students, colonists and teachers. It includes: "E. H. Fairchild—ax," "P. P. Pease—ax," etc. The young ladies were, of course, accommodated at housework about the boarding house.

The cost to the students was very low. According to the *Circular,* "The expenses of students in this Seminary are now, for board, at the table spread only with vegetable food, with fuel, lights, washing, and mending, 80 cents a week; and 92 cents a week for the same with animal food twice a day. Students who are able, furnish their own beds, and the indigent are supplied by the institute. Tuition is from 15 to 35 cents a week. School and classical books are procured by the Trustees in New York at wholesale, and sold to students lower than they are usually sold in the East at retail." The highest tuition paid by any student during the summer and fall terms, twenty-three weeks throughout, was $8.43 and the next highest $7.83. The 76 students attending in these two terms paid in altogether only $348.45. That the expense for supplies was low is clear from the numerous bills still preserved. William P. Cochran, the student who paid the highest tuition bill of $8.43, bought "1 Latin Reader" on May 29 for .83 cents, "1 Greek Reader" on June 5 for $1.15, and "1 Doz. Quills" on the 14th of July for 24 cents, making his bill, rendered July 23, $2.22. Henry Fairchild was charged with "½ Quire Paper–.11." On June 26, Eliza Branch bought a "Latin Reader" for 94 cents and S. H. Waldo, the Professor of Languages, purchased "1 Quire Paper" for 21 cents and "1 Set French Books—1.76."[20] Miscellaneous expenses for clothing, medicine, etc. were likewise very low. On May 14, Dr. Dascomb charged one student 37½ cents for advice and

[19]Memo—"Milking & Student Settlement, 1834" (Misc. Archives). One yoke of oxen was purchased for $57.50 on May 17, 1833 (First day-book, 1833–1835).

[20]"Income & Disbursements, November 1, 1834," and various bills in Miscellaneous Archives.



E. H. Fairchild ax
P. P. Pease ax
Lane & Harvey Butter & wedges
Sykes — Butter & 2 wedges
1 ax —
Wm Lewis — ax
Butter & wedges
Walker ax
Dascomb ax
Beardsley ax —
Butter & 2 wedges
Emerson ax —
Adams — ax
Steels — ax —
H. John — ax
Chas Moor ax
Joseph Mark ax.
Wm Knights ax

MEMORANDUM

Tools lent by the Oberlin Institute to students, faculty, and colonists. Note the names of E. H. Fairchild, P. P. Pease, and Dr. Dascomb.

(Original in the Miscellaneous Archives)

medicine and another 12½ cents for medicine. On the same day a dose of calomel cost William Cushman a shilling, but Father Shipherd paid a quarter for "advice and medicine." Hershel Reed had a tooth extracted on the 20th and paid a shilling. Cough drops also cost a shilling. Eliza Branch paid the same amount for a "dose Rhubarb" on the first day of June and again for an emetic three days later. A shilling also was the charge for lancing Peter Pindar Pease's finger. Washing was done for students at 37½¢ a dozen pieces; candles were supplied at a shilling a pound; mending and darning was also handled for a very small charge.[21]

One of the first teachers in the Institute wrote a splendid description of conditions in Oberlin in the summer of 1834. Her introduction to the colony would not be considered propitious by most women:

"At Elyria we dined & obtained a 2 horse waggon to transport us (2 gent. from N. Eng. going to the Institute as students) to *our journey's end*. . . . [G]lad were we when an opening in the forest dawned upon us, & Oberlin was seen. That, said our driver, is 'the City.' We rode through its principal street, now & then coming in contact with a stump, till we were set down—not at the Coffee House, or Tea House but the Boarding House. . . . We were soon introduced to Mr. & Mrs. Stewart—Superintendents of the Boarding & Manual labor departments. They were formerly missionaries among the Choctaws & are the very best of persons. The next day we attended meeting which is held for this season in the school room, tho it is already too small for the congregation. . . . Most of the scholars are hopefully [pious]. They are [generally] interesting & very intelligent. Some of them are [apparently] as [cultivated] as any I have ever known in N. Eng. Institutions. . . . We have now been here two weeks—health & spirits good & Oberlin already looks to us like home. Things about us are all going on so briskly *one* cannot well feel *sleepy*. You hear great trees falling, see fires blazing, & new houses going up in all directions. There are a few log houses wh. were put up at first but now they are building framed houses. . . . At present we have 60 or more boarders & of course must submit

[21]James Dascomb's Account Book (O. C. Lib.), and Mrs. E. C. Stewart's Report, Mar. 4, 1835 (Misc. Archives).

to some inconveniences—but we do it cheerfully—looking forward to *better times.*"[22]

Though unable, as yet, to come to Oberlin, Samuel R. Hall continued his active interest in the Institute. In October of 1833 he was planning a conference with Dascomb and Waldo at Andover on the organization of the new school. Hall wrote in late December to Shipherd that the "path of duty" seemed to lead to Oberlin. "I propose, therefore," he continued, "to visit Oberlin in the Spring, & to take a bird's eye view of the 'great west.' "[23]

In the spring of 1834 he was still planning on assuming the headship of the Institute. The March *Circular* states that, "Negotiations are now in progress with Rev. S. R. Hall, Principal of the Teachers Seminary And. Mass., which, it is hoped, will in due time result in his inauguration as President of the Literary department of the Oberlin Institute. Should he decline, another will be timely elected." The failure of this distinguished educator ever to assume his position at Oberlin is probably attributable to his poor health. On September 23, 1834, the trustees ordered "the corresponding Secretary . . . to negotiate for a President of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute." Hall's final refusal must have been received by this date.[24]

Scovill's appointment was never intended to be permanent and he left Oberlin at the end of March, 1834. The first regular faculty members arrived in May. James Dascomb, M.D., a student of Dr. Mussey's at the Dartmouth Medical School, came as Professor of Chemistry, Botany, and Physiology and also as colony physician. His wife, Mrs. Marianne Parker Dascomb, who had studied with Zilpah Grant [Banister] at Ipswich, Mass., later became the first Principal of the Female Department. Seth Waldo was a graduate of Amherst and a student in the Andover Theological Seminary. Daniel Branch, said also to have been an Amherst man, was made Principal of the Preparatory School. Mrs. Branch and Mrs. Waldo also did some teaching. Branch was Waldo's brother-in-law and Dascomb was Hall's brother-in-law. Both Waldo and Dascomb were appointed upon the recom-

[22]Marianne Dascomb to Daniel Parker, May 24, 1834 (O. C. Lib., Misc. MSS).

[23]Waldo to Shipherd, Oct. 7, 1833 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS), and Hall and Waldo to Shipherd, Dec. 30, 1833 (Treas. Off., File D).

[24]Arthur D. Wright and George E. Gardner, *Hall's Lectures on School Keeping,* 26, and T. M., Sept. 23, 1834.

mendation of Hall. In June the position of Professor of Mathematics was offered to Theodore Weld, then at Lane Seminary, who, however, refused the appointment.[25] What seems to have been the first formal meeting of the faculty took place in November:

"At a meeting Nov. 21st 1834 of the Faculty of Oberlin Collegiate Institute, present Rev. J. J. Shipherd, S. H. Waldo, James Dascomb & Daniel Branch it was voted that D. Branch be Secretary of the Faculty. Voted that James Dascomb be Librarian. Voted that the Faculty meet on Tuesday evening of each alternate week."

The *Circular* of the early spring had expressed the intention of establishing a collegiate department as soon as students should be found prepared for that work. At their meeting in September, 1834, the trustees voted that "Teachers in the Institute be authorized to examine and set upon a Collegiate course such of the Students as they may judge qualified for such standing, and that the Trustees be invited to be present at the examination."[26]

On the 29th of October the first public examination and "Commencement" was held. It was reported, fortunately, for a Cleveland paper:

"The examination of this Seminary took place on the 29th ultimo. and was well sustained throughout. The studies were English Grammar, Arithmetic, Geography, Botany, History, Rhetoric, Stenography, Natural Philosophy, Latin, Greek, and compositions in English. In all these branches the students appeared well, and evinced the Pleasing fact, that the teachers have been successful in their attempts for a thorough mental discipline. In the evening original compositions were read and spoken, and the exercise enlivened by an ingenious dialogue, and sacred music."[27]

In September the trustees appointed a special committee to "draft a code of bye Laws for the government of the Oberlin

[25]James H. Fairchild, *Oberlin, the Colony and the College,* (Oberlin—1883), 41–42, and Marianne Dascomb to Daniel Parker May 24, 1834 (O. C. Lib., Misc. MSS). Amherst records do not include Branch's name. Weld to Shipherd, June 21, 1834 (Misc. Archives).

[26]Faculty Minutes, and Trustees' Minutes, Sept. 23, 1834.

[27]Quoted from the *Cleveland Whig* in the *Ohio Atlas and Elyria Advertiser,* Nov. 13, 1834.

Collegiate institute & Report the same at the next meeting of the Board." The code drawn up by the committee was presented at the meeting of October 28 and adopted with some modifications. These "By Laws of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute" are divided into thirteen chapters: I. "Government of the Institute & duties of its officers." II. "System of Education," III. "Of Religious Exercises," IV. "Admission of the Students & their Continuance in the Institute," V. "Manual Labor," VI. "Steward's Department," VII. "Student's Rooms," VIII. "Fire Precautions," IX. "Hours of Labor, Study, Food and Devotion," X. "Deportment," XI. "The Library," XII. "Terms, Examinations, Vacations, Anniversary &c.," XIII. "Tuition Bill." The first paragraph under "System of Education" provides that, "This shall embrace the instruction of a preparatory or Academic department, a Teachers department, a Female Seminary, and a Collegiate department, in which shall be taught thoroughly the useful arts & sciences common in other similar institutions with such additions and amendments as experience shall dictate. It is designed also to add a Theological course when in the opinion of the Trustees it shall be called for."[28]

The enthusiasm of the religious zealot, of the inspired reformer, of the optimistic frontiersman led them on. On the very day preceding the adoption of the "by laws" a general mass meeting of colonists and students was held, at which it was "resolved, that in view of one year's experiment we are satisfied that this institution . . . is of immense importance to the scientific, political, and religious interests of this great valley, our nation and the world; and as such ought to be sustained and liberally endowed by the public."[29]

A month later the *First Annual Report* was issued:

"Hitherto the Lord hath helped us. This is evident from the rise and prosperity of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute, which the Trustees gratefully report to its patrons and the public. . . .

"Its grand object is the diffusion of useful science, sound morality, and pure religion, among the growing multitudes of the Mississippi Valley. It aims also at bearing an important part in extending these blessings to the destitute millions which over-

[28]These laws, never printed, are preserved in the Miscellaneous Archives.

[29]*The First Annual Report of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute* (Atlas Office, Elyria, Ohio), 10.

spread the earth. For this purpose it proposes as its primary object, the thorough education of Ministers and pious School Teachers. As a secondary object, the elevation of the female character. And as a third general design, the education of the *common people* with the higher classes in such manner as suits the nature of Republican institutions. . . .

"There have been during the year, more than one hundred students; of which 100 were members during the Summer term; of these 63 were males & 37 females; and more than 90 over 14 years of age—most of whom are eighteen. These are from six different states. In addition to these, greater numbers have applied for admission, but could not be received for want of room. The increase of numbers is not so much the design of this institution as the good of the world through those it educates. Therefore none are desired but those who are willing to endure that mental and manual toil, through which alone qualifications are obtained for the most extensive usefulness. Drones cannot be endured in this hive of industry. . . .

"Cheered onward by the results; and moved by the spirit stirring facts, that the dearest interests of our beloved Republic, and dearer Zion, and of a world for whom Christ died, are all involved in the christian education of our youth; hundreds of whom beg for admittance to the Oberlin Collegiate Institute; its trustees are fixed in their purpose that nothing shall be wanting on their part, to give it a deep and broad foundation and a noble superstructure. As the work is great, patriotic, and christian, those to whom it is entrusted, confidently appeal to the christian public for liberal aid in its accomplishment."[30]

Shipherd's mission to the East had not netted so much as it was hoped it would. The problem of securing funds was still the greatest obstacle in the way of success. Small gifts of money and goods were, fortunately, received in the autumn of 1833 and throughout 1834. In September of 1833, John Tolman of Enosburgh, Vermont, sent over fifty dollars worth of leather goods:

"Two sides of small upper leather
10 prs thick Brogans
3 " "
5 " Womens Bootees
2 " Calf Skin Boots"

[30]*First Annual Report.*

In October the ladies of Pawlet, where Shipherd had attended school and Stewart had grown up, Fayette Shipherd's first parish, sent a box of various articles valued at seventy dollars "for the Oberlin M. L. Institute." In the following May the books willed by the deceased brother of the founder, James K. Shipherd, and valued at $62.00 were shipped to Oberlin. In July Harmon Kingsbury of Cleveland, always a friend to Oberlin, presented "for the assistance of Pious, indigent young men, of promising talents for the Christian Ministry, in procuring their education, a horse which would have you, as a steward of our common Master's goods, dispose of as you think best for the promotion of the above named object. He is a little lame in the stifle,—has cost me about eighty five Dollars when much lamer than he now is—will be worth more if he gets well." Four days later he added to his gift:

"2 Axes
1 Shovel
1 Pitch fork
1 Hoe
1 Neck yoke for waggon harness
1 Joiners plane
1 Water Pail
1 Half Bushel
9 Articles which may be of some value to your establishment."[31]

From the beginning, however, the chief source of support was the system of so-called "scholarships." The announcement of September, 1833, declares: "Any church or individual furnishing 150 dollars . . . will establish a permanent scholarship; i.e. enable not only one individual, but a *succession* of individuals to obtain a thorough education for the ministry or school teaching. Those who establish scholarships may elect their beneficiaries, providing they select those who are of promising talent and piety. And any student who will pay to the Treasurer of this Institute 150 dollars may enjoy its full privileges."[32]

[31]John and Elizabeth Tolman to Shipherd, Sept. 24, 1833, and Kingsbury to Shipherd, July 10 and 14, 1834 (Treas. Off., File I); "Bill of goods from Ladies in Pawlet," Oct. 17, 1833, and "Bill of Books . . . on account of J. K. Shipherd late of Thetford, deceased, toward his subscription for the O. C. Institute," May, 1834 (Misc. Archives).

[32]*New York Evangelist*, Sept. 7, 1833.

The March, 1834, *Circular* further states that, "The 150 dollars is the proportion of outfit money expended to furnish an individual with the privileges of the Oberlin Institute. . . . It should be understood that students can be admitted to the boarding and manual labor privileges of this Seminary, only on Scholarships established by themselves, their friends, or the benevolent in their behalf; and that these scholarships do not guarantee the students support, nor any part of it, nor pay his tuition; but they are so expended as to furnish board, tuition, books, &c., at a very low rate; and give the beneficiary peculiar facilities for defraying expenses of these by those services which are necessary, irrespective of support, to a finished Christian education."

In the *First Annual Report* it was explained that: "Temporary students are received without scholarships, and charged for board and manual labor privileges the interest thereof in addition to what is paid by the beneficiaries of these scholarships; i.e. at the rate of 9.00 per year. Those who board out of the commons, and do not enjoy the manual labor facilities of the Institute, are received to all the departments without scholarships and pay the ordinary tuition." It would appear that these scholarships might better be called stock, as they represented an investment in capital and did not relieve the beneficiary from the payment of tuition, incidental or other regular charges. It is not surprising that this system of raising money should have led to much criticism and misunderstanding.

It was a vulnerable point for Oberlin's enemies to attack, and the *Ohio Observer,* the organ of Western Reserve College (edited by a trustee), made the most of it. In June, 1834, Oberlin and the scholarship plan were attacked editorially and by an anonymous contributor in this religious periodical. The anonymous writer found that, "The most striking feature of an exceptional character that appears in the Oberlin Institute is, that while it builds its claims to public patronage upon its benevolent character, it makes the unheard of requisition that every student upon his entrance, *shall pay or cause to be paid the sum of 150 dollars for the mere privilege of going to school there* and using the tools of the establishment. The last privilege amounts to nothing, for almost every one who employs laborers, expects to find for them the implements of labor, so

that there is 150 dollars for permission to attend on this Institution, without paying by this money any of the expenses of board or tuition. Truly there must be thought some wonderful advantages enjoyed here which are furnished nowhere else in this or any other land. For there is not, it may be presumed, another institution in our land, if there is in the literary world, where *'an outfit'* of this amount is required on entrance, especially, I will warrant, no *benevolent* Institution. There is not another Manual Labor or Mental Labor College where a student cannot have free access upon paying the bills that accrue for his necessary expenses of board, tuition, &c. This is to me very strange, and I should like very much to see it explained."[33]

In his reply, published a month later, Shipherd pointed out that the announcement had been, accidentally or intentionally, misread. Only students able to do so were expected to pay for their own scholarships; the indigent were expected to be supplied by benevolent donors.[34] Undoubtedly it did seem absurd to many readers, however, that the scholarships did not cover tuition or other ordinary expenses but merely granted the student admission to the institution and the right to the use of manual labor tools.

In a statement prepared by Shipherd in the summer of 1834, 63 scholarships are listed as outstanding. Two are in his own name, one is credited to Stewart, one to Pease, one to Redington. Fayette Shipherd's name is in the list as also that of John Tappan of Boston. A number of Congregational churches held scholarships: the church at Moriah, N. Y., the home of Zebulon Shipherd; in Vermont, the churches of Enosburgh, Pawlet, and Cornwall; in New Hampshire, churches at Dunbarton, Campton, Plymouth, Franklin, Boscawen, Canterbury, and Concord, and in Massachusetts, the Tabernacle Church at Salem and the churches in New Boston, Meredith Valley, and Newburyport.[35] Many of these scholarships Shipherd had secured himself; others were obtained by Benjamin Woodbury, the agent in New England from the fall of 1833 to 1835. As early as the middle of September of 1833 Woodbury notified Shipherd that he had sold a scholarship, for which he received cash in full, an unusual

[33]"Scrutator" in the *Ohio Observer,* June 12, 1834.
[34]*Ohio Observer,* July 17, 1834.
[35]"List of outstanding Scholarships, 1834" (Misc. Archives).

circumstance, thirty or forty dollars down being the commonest first payment. The last of January of 1834, he visited the Female Seminary at Ipswich, Mass., and obtained $350.00—one scholarship from Mary Lyon and one and a third from Miss Zilpah Grant, the principal, and her teachers and pupils. Miss Grant promised to pay another hundred dollars the next year, thus increasing the subscription to three scholarships in all. Woodbury found opposition in some places and much competition from agents of other causes. A representative of Lane Seminary called on him at Lowell "was supercilleous as you pleas, '*his object* was *paramount*,'—asked many questions—intimated that there was no very great need of Ob., that there were likely to be too many Institutions in the West &c &c." By May he had collected over $1300.00, on October 10 nearly $2500.00, at the end of his mission in March, 1835, nearly $4,000 in cash and over $10,000 in subscriptions.[36]

In the winter of 1834–35, O. D. Hibbard, a student, sold scholarships in western and central New York State from Buffalo to Utica. Hibbard, like many others, seems to have misunderstood the purpose of the scholarships. A patron later wrote to Oberlin that Hibbard had given a quite unorthodox description of the value of a scholarship: "The scholarship system he defined to be as follows, the proprietors of scholarships owned the Institution, the buildings and farm together with some mills &.C. It was all carried on to the best advantage and the profits divided among those who held scholarships. Said the scholarship was transferable property, could be deeded or willed and that an Individual holding a scholarship could Keep a student in the Institution free of room rent or tuition."[37] When the *First Annual Report* of December, 1834, reached the agent he felt betrayed and wrote to Shipherd with considerable heat. He asked for some explanation and whether he should cease "Labouring for scholarships" and instead "labour for donations as a charity."[38]

[36]Woodbury to Shipherd, Sept. 18, 1833, Feb. 10, July 14, Oct. 10, 1834; Mar. 26, 1835 (Treas. Off., File J), and "Benj. Woodbury Statistical Rept., May, 1834" (Misc. Archives).

[37]Shipherd's instructions to Hibbard, labelled "Old Treasy Doc.—O. D. Hibbard's, Ag'ts Instructions," Oct. 7, 1834, are in the Misc. Archives. Also Mary Hunt to Mahan, Aug. 22, 1840 (Treas. Off., File D).

[38]Hibbard to Shipherd, Dec. 25, 1834 (Treas. Off., File D).

There were many others who had misconceptions about the scholarships. One of the men who had purchased a scholarship from Woodbury wrote to Oberlin in 1835: "I expect to send my son or some other young man in September next to Commence the Study for the Ministry & expect that he will be Carried threw the whole Course of Study for the Ministry for the hundred & fifty Dollars that I paid to Revd Mr. Woodbury Sept 2d 1833. . . . [I]s the Board & Books included in the hundred & fifty Dollars?"[39] It is quite obvious that the writer believed that no additional tuition would be charged and that a scholarship was necessary to admission.

The attitude of the trustees is shown in a resolution of July 1, 1835: "That Students who are able on being recd into this Institution shall pay $150.00 or 8 pr ct interest on the same." In the following August the sale of these scholarships was finally discontinued. Whatever they had been in the beginning, it is clear that they were now recognized as being no more than charitable donations.[40] Years afterwards, however, students presented them, hoping to receive free tuition, and they continued to cause misunderstanding and ill-feeling. In 1849 the trustees refunded $150.00 to one complaining purchaser.[41]

This was Shipherd's scheme for financing the school. Stewart had one, too: he would patent a number of inventions which he was contriving and bestow them on Oberlin as an endowment. Thus the *whittler* Stewart would serve the *missionary* Stewart. In Elyria he worked on models of a new planing machine and a new cooking stove. It was his hope that the stove might prove popular enough to result in considerable profits for the colony and school. On March 12, 1833, he wrote to Shipherd: "I wish to employ my time so as most effectually to promote the inter-

[39]Jonathan Linnett to Mahan, July 27, 1835 (Treas. Off., File E).

[40]Delia Fenn to Richard Fenn, Aug. 21, 1835 (O. C. Lib.). In 1836 Shipherd, at the instance of the Board of Trustees, prepared a rather lame apology for this awkward system of raising money. T. M., Mar. 9, 1836, and MS entitled "Oberlin Scholarships" dated, Mar. 8, 1836 (Misc. Archives). The latter was published in the *New York Evangelist,* Apr. 9, 1836. Delazon Smith expressed a common attitude: "After having ascertained the real *present* worth of your scholarship (nothing), I think you will be fully prepared to give the agents of the Oberlin Collegiate and Theological Seminary due credit, to wit: For having very ingeniously *swindled* from you one hundred and fifty dollars."—Delazon Smith, *A History of Oberlin,* 9.

[41]Statement of A. E. G. Mattison, 1849 (Misc. Archives); T. M., Aug. 23, 1849, and P. C. M., Oct. 3, 1843, and Mar. 10, 1855.

ests of the Institution: & I am not fully satisfied at present how that can be done. I am still occupied about the *stove*. If the Furnace had not 'blown out' again I should probably have had the oven cast, & the whole stove tested before this. I hope however it will be done in the course of three or four weeks. . . . As many as ten families have manifested a desire to purchase, if it should meet their expectations." Of course it would be necessary for the trustees to put some money into the enterprises. "The Board are disposed to try & see what can be made from the Stove," the inventor continued, "If this is done, it will be necessary to invest funds to some amount, in them, & this arrangement would probably retard some of our operations. But we must comit it all to the Lord. 'Many are the devices in a man's heart, but the Counsel of the Lord, that shall stand'."[42]

In April Stewart could report much progress and had become very optimistic with regard to future prospects. "I am yet occupied about the stove. I have recently had an oven cast and attached to the part we had before & it operates well. . . . It is now rendered quite certain in the view of those who have examined this stove that it will supercede most if not all other cooking-stoves in the country. At any rate there is a prospect of considerable profit to the Institution if the business is prosecuted." Esther Shipherd evidently had considerable faith in the invention, for, at about the same time, she informed her husband that, "Mr. Stewart has completed his stove and the people are very much in favor of it, he has had several spoken for, he calls it the Oberlin patent."[43]

Before the end of May four stoves had been cast. In the next month they were all put to use in the new colony. Early in July Stewart wrote of the enterprise: "I am still occupied about the stove. We have had 5 cast and fitted up. . . . Five more are already engaged. Individuals from different parts of the country have examined this stove, & uniformly express the belief that it wd sell in their vicinity in prefference to any other. It seems to me to be a matter of considerable importance that we git them spread abroad considerably the present season. The probability is, that by having one or two in a place, the Winter coming on we

[42]P. P. Stewart to J. J. Shipherd, Mar. 12, 1833 (Treas. Off., File I).
[43]P. P. S. to J. J. S. [Apr. ?], 1833 (Treas. Off., File H), and Esther Shipherd to J. J. S., Apr. 8, 1833 (Treas. Off., File I).

could sell in every such place . . . from a half a dozzen, to a dozzen, during the *next* season." Stewart felt that it would probably be advisable to secure a patent soon, before the new ideas in the stove were appropriated by other stove makers.[44]

On June 19, 1834, a patent was granted to "Philo P. Stewart of Elyria, in the County of Lorain and State of Ohio" for "a new and useful improvement in the cooking stove . . . denominated The Oberlin Cooking Stove."[45] In September of the same year Stewart deeded his rights by this patent to the Institute for a period of three years "in consideration of the love I bear towards my redeemer & Saviour Jesus Christ, and for the promotion of the Gospel and particularly the Establishment of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute."[46]

An advertisement dated June 25, 1834, appears in a November issue of an Elyria newspaper:

> "OBERLIN COOKING STOVES
>
> "R. E. Gillet agent—has on hand and will keep for sale a supply of the celebrated Oberlin Cooking Stoves, the best kind in use. Orders filled on short notice for any quantity."[47]

It is evident that arrangements had been made in the spring with Gillett and Johnson of Elyria, through R. E. Gillett, to manufacture the Oberlin stove. In a letter of the last of June Gillett refers to a "few stoves on hand" and three stoves that had already been sent to Zanesville. A statement presented by Gillett and Johnson to the Oberlin Institute in the spring of 1835 lists nine Oberlin stoves made by that firm since September 1, 1834. One of these stoves was shipped to Akron, and two were supplied to Oberlin colonists: N. P. Fletcher and Bela Hall.[48]

In August, 1834, a letter was received from an agent in Lima, ordering three stoves. Evidently Stewart's patent was "taking." The prospects for profits from sales of the cooking stove seemed so good, indeed, that the trustees at their meeting in February

[44]P. P. S. to J. J. S., May 25, 1833 (Treas. Off., File I), and July 2, 1833 (O. C. Lib., Misc. MSS).

[45]A photostat of the Letters Patent of the Oberlin Cooking Stove of June 19, 1834, was supplied by the United States Patent Office, Washington.

[46]The deed is in the Miscellaneous Archives.

[47]*Ohio Atlas and Elyria Advertiser,* Nov. 13, 1834.

[48]R. E. Gillett to J. J. Shipherd, June 28, 1834 (Treas. Off., File C), and statement in the Misc. Archives.

## 3000 Pounds

FLEECE WOOL for sale very lo
the Elyria Cash Store.
*June 24th*, 1834.

## TEAS! TEAS!!

FIRST Quality Young Hyson Tea at 5s.
6d, Hysen Skin 3s.
JOHNSON & CLARK.
*Elyria June 24th*, 1834.

## *OBERLIN COOKING STOVES.*

R. E. GILLET agent—has on hand and will keep for sale a supply of the celebrated "Oberlin Cooking Stoves," the best kind in use. Orders filled on short notice for any quantity.
*Elyria, June 25*, 1834.

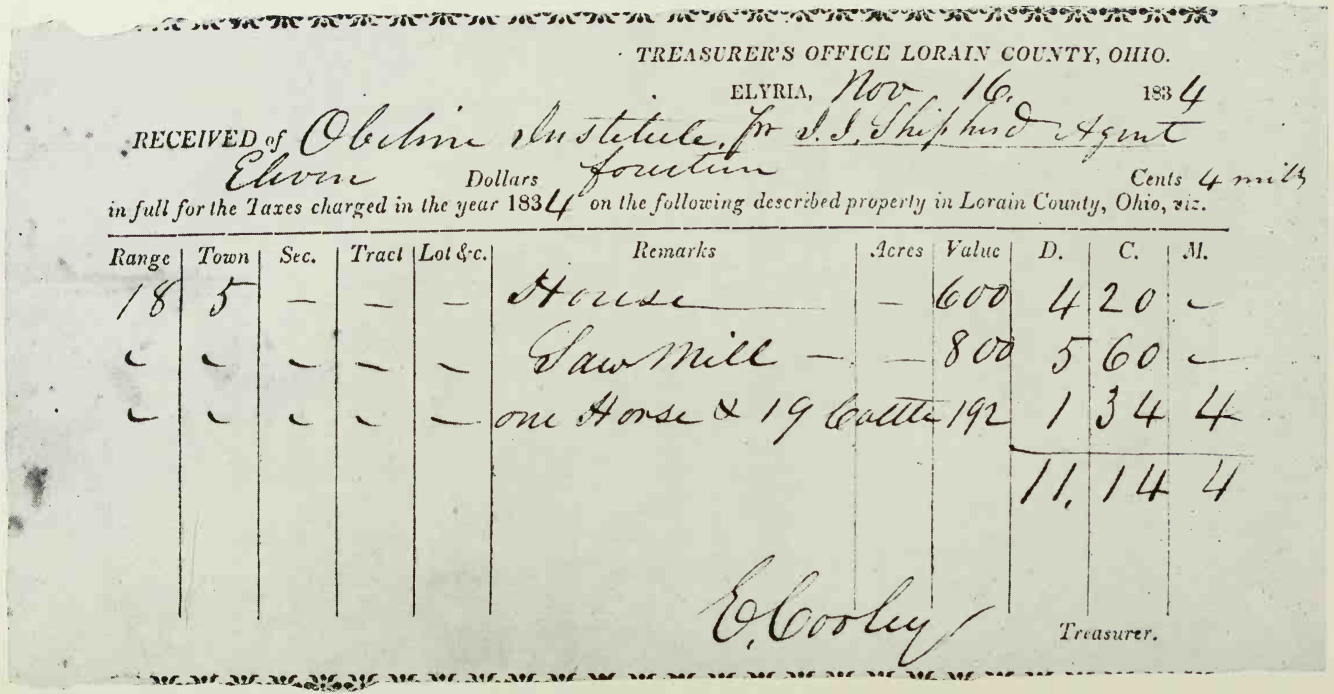
## WHIPS! WHIPS!!

JUST received and are now offered to the public the largest and best assortment of Whips ever exposed for sale in this part of the country, among which may be found of almost any description, from a small riding, up to that of sufficient size and length for stage whips. That part of the public who are in the habit of using this article, invited to call at the store of GATES EEN, and examine for themselves.
1834.

## WINDOW GLASS

ADVERTISEMENT OF THE OBERLIN COOKING STOVES

(From the *Ohio Atlas and Elyria Advertiser*, November 13, 1834, courtesy of the Western Reserve Historical Society. Photo by Edmondson.)



TREASURER'S OFFICE LORAIN COUNTY, OHIO.

ELYRIA, Nov 16. 1834

RECEIVED of Oberlin Institute, for I. I. Shipherd Agent

Eleven Dollars fourteen Cents 4 mills

in full for the Taxes charged in the year 1834 on the following described property in Lorain County, Ohio, viz.

| Range | Town | Sec. | Tract | Lot &c. | Remarks | Acres | Value | D. | C. | M. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18 | 5 | — | — | — | House | — | 600 | 4 | 20 | — |
| — | — | — | — | — | Saw Mill | — | 800 | 5 | 60 | — |
| — | — | — | — | — | one Horse & 19 Cattle | | 192 | 1 | 34 | 4 |
| | | | | | | | | 11, | 14 | 4 |

E. Cooley

Treasurer.

TAX RETURN OF THE OBERLIN INSTITUTE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 1833–34

(Original in the Miscellaneous Archives)

of 1835 released Stewart from his position in charge of the boarding house so that he might devote all of his attention to the making of stove patterns.[49]

In February of 1835 a contract was made with John Moore, proprietor of the Mary Ann Furnace at Newark, Ohio, whereby he agreed to pay two dollars per stove to Oberlin for the privilege of making Oberlin cooking stoves and selling them in certain counties in central and northern Ohio. In the next year one hundred and twenty-three stoves were manufactured at the Mary Ann Furnace. Apparently the competition from other patents was too strong and no more were ever made.[50]

In March of 1834 Shipherd was officially appointed "General Agent of the Oberlin Institute" to manage the financial affairs in Oberlin as well as to solicit funds outside. In June we find him on a visit to Mansfield, where he hoped to get much aid and did obtain one scholarship. Whatever else Shipherd was, however, he was not a financier. The most valuable letters and other records were in the utmost confusion, some of them piled on the floor and in baskets in the building where they were kept. It is said that from 1832 to 1835 "it never was possible to balance his accounts."[51] On October 8, 1834, the auditing committee of the Board of Trustees reported that accounts showed $42.11 due to Shipherd and $110.08 due from Pease, but that, "At the same time from the manner in which the accounts were kept [by Shipherd] we have no doubt but that Some Items from the Multiplicity of business have been omitted to be credited, therefore [we] recommend striking a balance even with both of your Agents."[52]

Despite the optimistic public pronouncements it is clear that the enterprise was in a more than precarious financial state. Already in June the Institute was in straits. Most of the sub-

[49]S. Guthrie to J. J. Shipherd, Aug. 26, 1834 (Treas. Off., File C), and T. M., Feb. 10, 1835. Correspondence in the Treas. Off., File B, indicates that stoves were also made by Conants, Haven & Co. at Ohio City (Cleveland).

[50]Copies of letters from N. P. F[letcher] to Messrs John Moore & Co., Dec. 24, 1834, and Feb. 3, 1835; John Moore & Co. to Levi Burnell, June 11, 1836, and July 26, 1836 (All in Treas. Off., File F).

[51]T. M., Mar. 10, 1834; J. J. S. to Fayette Shipherd, June 14, 1834 (Shipherd MSS), and N. P. Fletcher, Critical letters to Levi Burnell, 1837, No. 4. (MSS in Misc. Archives).

[52]"N. P. Fletcher, chairman of Committee & others—Report on the accounts of J. J. Shipherd & Peter P. Pease, Oct. 8, 1834" (Misc. Archives).

scribers for scholarships were failing in their late payments; few new subscriptions were coming in. Shipherd wrote to his brother: "Young men of promising talent & piety, after I have written to them that we are full, & cannot receive them, come to us, hundreds of miles, & beg for admittance saying 'we will eat anything & sleep on anything if you will give us an opportunity to obtain a thorough education for usefulness, & defray the expense by our own labors.' What heart that feels in the least for a dying world could bid them depart if it were possible to provide for them. And yet dear br. I am under the distressing necessity of rejecting such for want of a few thousand dollars by which I could place them in such circumstances as would through the Lord's blessing, in a few years send them forth to 'endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ'."[53]

It was planned to expand the enterprise: the college course was already begun; a theological department was to be opened soon, and yet there were only a few thousand dollars in sight, mostly from Woodbury's mission. The tuition received from the students had fallen short by $76.55 of meeting the salaries of the teachers. An emergency call was sent to Woodbury.[54] Money *must* be forthcoming: "What shall be done?—What shall be done? was the earnest enquiry," one of the trustees later wrote. "A large boarding house was needed—3 or 4 professors immediately and a president of the Institution—and some large College buildings for the accomodation of the scholars, was Indispensibly necessary—and the subscriptions already obtained were inadequate for the demands of the boarding house and necessary improvements, and it was obvious that unless some measures were devised correspondent to our wants, and carried into Execution with promptness, the design must fail."[55] One faction desired to retrench and bring the enterprise within their ability to pay. They argued, says the same trustee, who was on the other side, that, "a wise reduction of our expenditures and a stopage [sic] of our improvements would bring us to a financial state in which the labours of our N. England Agent would fully justify us, and bear us thro'—that board in the Commons could be reduced to almost

[53]J. J .S., to Fayette Shipherd, June 14, 1834 (Shipherd MSS).

[54]"Tuition, Income & Disbursements, November 1, 1834" (MS in Misc. Archives), and Woodbury to E. Redington, Jan. 9, 1835 (Treas. Off., File J).

[55]N. P. Fletcher, Critical letters, No. 2.

nothing." The majority however insisted on holding on and making an appeal for more adequate support for the Oberlin Institute as it had been projected.

It is certain that the ship was almost on the rocks. Succor was immediately needed. It is little wonder that when it came it was looked upon as providential.

## CHAPTER XII

# *IMMEDIATE EMANCIPATION*

"I AM in earnest—I will not equivocate—I will not excuse —I will not retreat a single inch—AND I WILL BE HEARD." It was the voice of William Lloyd Garrison speaking through the first issue of the *Liberator* on January 1, 1831, denouncing slavery in the Land of Freedom and calling for immediate emancipation. There may be some doubts regarding the effectiveness of Garrison as a leader and, in later days, as a propagandist, but the importance of this first awakening cry of the New England conscience on the question of Negro slavery can hardly be denied. And nowhere were there tenderer consciences than among the Finney men of the expanded New England—on the Mohawk, on the Genesee, in New York City, and in Ohio.

Finney and his followers were religious activists, good soldiers recruited to fight the battles of righteousness under the banners of the Lord. In 1829 Theodore Weld wrote to Zephaniah Platt of "*the vitality of Godliness* . . . something more than the *negatives* & *passives* of religion."[1] Stanton, Monteith, the Tappans, George Avery, Lyman, and Weld demonstrated this vitality in their work for manual labor schools and for temperance. Wherever Finney made converts to the more vital Christianity Weld founded temperance societies. "The Lord . . . sent Mr. Weld here last week [to speak] on the subject of temperance," Nathaniel Andrews wrote from Whitesboro in 1831. "His arguments were powerful and conclusive. I think we could not have found a more able advocate. At the close of his remarks a constitution found[ed] on total abstinence was presented & immediately between thirty & forty subscribed to it."[2] The *Rochester Observer* described how in January, 1831, when Weld was on his way west he appeared before a capacity crowd in the Rochester First Pres-

[1]Letter dated Nov. 16, 1829 (Finney MSS).
[2]N. Andrews to Mr. and Mrs. Finney, Mar. 14, 1831 (Finney MSS).

byterian Church and "marched up and attacked and carried the defences of the drunkard, the temperate drinker, the manufacturer and vendor."[3] We have already noted that his lectures in the West in the following year on manual labor were interspersed with others on female education and temperance.

Down to this time the only important benevolent organization devoted to the cause of the slave was the American Colonization Society. The central feature in the colonization program was the return of colored persons from the United States to Africa. Southerners supported the society because it promised to help eliminate the troublesome free Negroes from the South; philanthropic Northerners supported it simply because it was the only influential, national anti-slavery society. Garrison shocked the easy Northern complaisance; colonizationism, he declared, was really not anti-slavery at all. If emancipation awaited transportation to Africa it would never come. The way to free the slaves was to free the slaves—immediate emancipation.

This sounded logical to the *Rochester Observer*. "The Liberator . . . is the name of a small but neatly executed paper which has just made its *debut* under the editorship of Mr. Wm. L. Garrison, the fearless but persecuted advocate of freedom," said the *Observer* editorially on January 13, 1831. "We heartily wish Mr. Garrison that success which his noble and philanthropic undertaking so well deserves." This was while Finney was still in town conducting his famous revival. In March following, the *Observer* took its position frankly by Garrison's side in opposition to colonization.[4] In November, 1833, a meeting of "all persons friendly to the *Immediate* abolition of *Slavery*" was held in the Third Presbyterian Church and the Rochester Anti-Slavery Society was founded. The Monroe County Anti-Slavery Society was formed, also in Rochester, the following year.[5] The Rochester Anti-Slavery Society published an official organ in 1834 called the *Rights of Man*.[6] Active members of these societies were Finneyites George A. Avery and Samuel D. Porter.[7]

[3]*Rochester Observer*, Jan. 18, 1832.
[4]*Ibid.*, Mar. 10, 1831.
[5]*Rochester Daily Advertiser*, Nov. 16, 1833, and *Rochester Daily Democrat*, June 25, 1834.
[6]Scattered file in the Rochester Public Library from Apr. 26 to July 4, 1834.
[7]Dates are not available on the first officers but in 1836 and 1838 Samuel D. Porter is known to have been recording secretary, and Avery was treasurer in

Not only had the life of Professor Beriah Green of Western Reserve College run a close parallel to that of John Jay Shipherd, but while pastor at Brandon, Vermont, he must certainly have been conscious of the presence of William Lloyd Garrison and his first reforming paper, the *Journal of the Times,* at near-by Bennington.[8] Weld visited Western Reserve College in 1832 and, though not an immediatist at the time, his whole souled hatred of all "sin," including intemperance, ignorance and slavery, undoubtedly stimulated thought along that line.[9] In November of 1832 Green announced the conversion to immediatism of the entire Reserve faculty: Elizur Wright, Jr., President Storrs, and himself, as well as Wright's father and several students. He gave the credit to the influence of the *Liberator,* Garrison's *Thoughts on Colonization* and a pamphlet by Charles Stuart.[10] Discussion of the issue of colonization vs. immediatism first began in "the regular disputations of the college" in the fall term of 1832. It soon appeared to Green and his colleagues that the colonizationists advanced expediency as their chief argument while the immediatists were able to insist on "naked rectitude." In *Four Sermons, Preached in the Chapel of the Western Reserve College* in the latter part of November and the first part of December, 1832, Green came out on the side of the radicals. When these sermons were published in February, 1833, under the above title, President Storrs and Professor Wright declared in an accompanying statement that they believed the "sentiments" therein expressed to be "scriptural."[11]

Conservative friends of the college at Hudson, including some of the trustees, were greatly shocked at the faculty's sponsorship of such dangerous, radical doctrines. In the chapel while Green was speaking there was some demonstration of opposition. The

1836 and a vice-president in 1838. *Cf. Rochester Daily Democrat,* July 8, 1836, and Henry O'Reilly, *Settlement in the West, Sketches of Rochester* (Rochester—1838), 316.

[8]David M. Ludlum, *Social Ferment in Vermont, 1791–1850* (N. Y.—1939), 138–141.

[9]That he was still a colonizationist is shown by Dumond: *Antislavery Origins of the Civil War,* 23–24, and Weld to Birney, Sept. 1832, *Letters of James Gillespie Birney,* I, 27.

[10]Green's letter, dated Nov. 5, 1832, was published in the *Liberator,* Jan. 5, 1833.

[11]Beriah Green, *Four Sermons, etc.* (Cleveland—1832). See especially the preface (3–5) and the statement of Wright and Storrs (6). Also E. Wright, Jr., to Weld, Dec. 7, 1832, Barnes and Dumond, *Op. Cit.,* I, 94–7.

*Ohio Observer*, the religious paper published at Hudson, refused to publish letters in behalf of immediatism.[12] The trustees gladly released Green to go to New York to become the head of the Oneida Institute, and Elizur Wright, Jr., to go to New York City to devote his entire time to anti-slavery work. Storrs resigned because of ill-health and died in September. Certainly, more or less indirect pressure was brought to bear on Wright to get him to go.[13] The trustees turned down by only one vote a rule prohibiting the discussion of abolitionism, when practically all the students petitioned against such action.[14] The conservatives rejoiced at this faculty purge. The *Cleveland Herald* editorialized: "We sincerely hope that this institution which is so favorably located, and which went into operation under circumstances so auspicious, when relieved from the malign influences under which it has, for some time past laboured, may yet beneficially subserve the great and important purpose for which it was instituted, and become as celebrated for its usefulness as it has heretofore been for its devotion to the negro question."[15]

But at the same time that the conservatives won their victory in the college the abolitionists went ahead organizing the Western Reserve Anti-Slavery Society. The first officers were Elizur Wright, Sr., of Tallmadge, president; the Rev. Henry Cowles of the Anti-Slavery Society of Ashtabula County, corresponding secretary; Owen Brown of Hudson, a radical trustee of the college and father of the Martyr, treasurer, and among the "counsellors," John M. Sterling of Cleveland and the Rev. John Monteith of Elyria.[16] Sterling was a graduate of Yale in the class of 1820, a lawyer in Cleveland since 1827, and a promoter of all reform causes.[17] Cowles was one of the most active anti-slavery men on the Reserve. On July 4, 1834, at Austinburg, he delivered the principal address at the first anniversary of the Anti-Slavery Society of Ashtabula County. In this address, it was re-

[12]*Liberator*, Mar. 23, 1833.

[13]P. G. and E. Q. Wright, *Elizur Wright* (Chicago—c. 1937), 57–65, and Carroll Cutler, *A History of Western Reserve College* (Cleveland—1876).

[14]*Ibid.*, 65, and Wright to Weld, Sept. 5, 1833, Barnes and Dumond, *Op. Cit.*, I, 114–7.

[15]*Cleveland Herald*, Sept. 7, 1833, quoted in the *Annals of Cleveland*. See also C. M. Drury, *Henry Harmon Spalding*, (Caldwell, Idaho—1936), 48.

[16]*Liberator*, Sept. 21, 1833.

[17]Information from Office of the Secretary of Yale University.

ported to the *Emancipator* that he showed "in a favorable manner the enormity of the sin of slavery . . . — the justice, safety and expediency of immediate emancipation." He spoke again at the annual meeting of the Western Reserve Anti-Slavery Society held at Hudson in August, and was elected a "counsellor" along with Monteith, Dr. William N. Hudson of Chester and John Jay Shipherd. As Stated Clerk of the Grand River Presbytery he signed a statement adopted at the annual meeting in September declaring that slavery was "a direct violation of the moral law." At the meeting of the Synod of the Western Reserve at Hudson in October Cowles sought, with the support of Monteith and Stephen Peet, to secure the adoption of a similar resolution. The opposition advanced "the evil which had befallen the college in consequence of the agitation" as an argument against such action, and the resolution was defeated by a vote of 29 to 27.[18]

John Monteith was the leading abolitionist of Elyria where considerable interest in immediatism was evidenced from March, 1934, on — so much that the Rev. Daniel W. Lathrop felt that it was interfering with the work of the churches.[19] In the fall and early winter Charles Stuart toured the Reserve in behalf of the slave, observing the synodical meeting at Hudson, lecturing to the students at the college, and at Tallmadge, at Cleveland, and twice at Elyria.[20] The Lorain County Anti-Slavery Society was organized February 26, 1835. Monteith was president, Levi Burnell of Elyria, a Finney man from Rochester, was corresponding secretary, and the "managers" included L. J. and Robbins Burrell of Sheffield and Nathan P. Fletcher, Esq., of Oberlin.[21]

Beriah Green stirred up the Oneida Institute and Utica as he had Western Reserve College and Hudson. In the summer of 1833 the students at the Institute engaged in a debate on immediatism and founded an anti-slavery society which they believed to be the first in the state. One student (C. Stewart Renshaw) wrote to Finney that it was his chief aim to "preach *abolition — Emancipation from Sin & Slavery.*" On March 1,

[18]*Emancipator,* Aug. 12, Sept. 30, and Oct. 28, 1834.

[19]*Emancipator,* Mar. 4, 1834, and D. W. Lathrop to Absalom Peters, Sept. 26, 1834 (A. H. M. S. MSS).

[20]Stuart to E. Wright, Jr., Dec. 11, 1834, *Emancipator,* Dec. 23, 1834, and Stuart to Weld, Nov. 24, 1834, Barnes and Dumond, *Op. Cit.,* I, 176–7.

[21]Asa Mahan is listed among the managers but was actually not yet in Oberlin at the time of organization.—*Emancipator,* June 9, 1835.

1834, the student colonization society dissolved itself in favor of the anti-slavery society.[22] Milton Brayton wrote to Finney in August, 1833, that there had been much discussion in Utica and that he, himself, had been converted to abolitionism. But in the following winter the Common Council of the City of Utica adopted a resolution denouncing "the agitation of the question of negro slavery, as being highly inexpedient at the present juncture of our national affairs."[23] It was not surprising, therefore, that Professor Green was hanged in effigy on Genesee Street soon after, and that the state anti-slavery convention meeting in Utica in 1835 was forced to adjourn by a mob. Alvan Stewart, one of Finney's lawyer converts, was able, however, to finish his opening address.[24] Early in 1836 an attack was launched upon the Oneida Institute in the legislature at Albany because its students were "in the habit of haranguing the people on the subject of abolitionism."[25] No action was taken but the Institute was made increasingly notorious as a hotbed of radicalism, and gradually declined from this date until it was abandoned and the plant turned over to the Freewill Baptists in 1844.

The pious gentlemen of New York City were the key group in the Finneyite organization: they held a central position, and they had money. They had never been oblivious to the call of the "oppressed" Negro, but originally, like most other benevolent northern Christians, they had supported colonization. In 1831, the year of awakening, they saw the light, and an informal discussion of immediatism took place among the inner circle.[26] Overt activity awaited the year of organization, 1833. The signal for action came from the debates at Western Reserve College and the Oneida Institute, and from England, where Charles Stuart, a Finney convert, was participating in the movement which produced the act emancipating the slaves in the British West Indies.[27] In July, 1833, a group of New Yorkers threw down the gage to the Colonization Society by asking in an open letter

[22]Renshaw to Finney, July 15, 1833 (Finney MSS), and H. B. Stanton to J. Leavitt, Mar. 10, 1834, *Emancipator,* Mar. 25, 1834.

[23]Brayton to Finney, Aug. 6, 1833 (Finney MSS), and *Emancipator,* Jan. 21, 1834.

[24]*Emancipator,* Jan. 28, 1834; M. Block, "Beriah Green," 27–28, and P. H. Fowler, *Presbyterianism . . . [in] Central New York,* 164–7.

[25]Block, "Green," 29–32.

[26]See Barnes, *Antislavery Impulse,* 35–36.

[27]Charles Stuart, in a letter to Arthur Tappan, declared that his support of immediatism predated his contacts with Garrison.—*Liberator,* Oct. 12, 1833.

the embarrassing and rhetorical question: Was it the ultimate aim of that society to effect the "complete extinction of Slavery in the United States"? Among the signers of the letter were Arthur Tappan, Lewis Tappan, Joshua Leavitt of the *New York Evangelist,* Theodore Weld (then at Lane), and Charles G. Finney. They received, as they expected, a somewhat evasive answer.[28] The New York Anti-Slavery Society was founded at Finney's Chatham Street Chapel on October 2, 1833, while the mob howled outside. Arthur Tappan was president; William Green, Jr., vice-president, and the managers included Lewis Tappan, William Goodell and Joshua Leavitt.[29] The *Emancipator,* founded in the previous spring, was their organ, but such new-measures religious papers as the *New York Evangelist* and the *Western Recorder* gave sympathetic support. Early the next year the Female Anti-Slavery Society of Chatham Street Chapel was organized and Mrs. William Green, Jr., became "First Directress."[30]

Late in 1831 Garrison had founded the New England Anti-Slavery Society, and in December, 1833, the New England and New York Yankees united at a convention in Philadelphia to form the American Anti-Slavery Society. Beriah Green presided; Elizur Wright, Jr., was made a corresponding secretary, and Arthur Tappan was elected president. John M. Sterling of Cleveland helped Garrison draft the Declaration of Principles. John Frost of Whitesboro and William Green, Jr., of New York City were delegates. The first managers included from Ohio: Henry Cowles, John Monteith and Sterling.[31]

Also in 1833 the Rev. Amos A. Phelps of Boston circulated among the clergymen of the North a "Declaration of Sentiment" in favor of immediate emancipation. Of the 124 ministers who signed, the majority were from New England, but ten signers were from New York and sixteen from Ohio. Most of the New Yorkers were Finneyites, including D. C. Lansing, Joel Parker, Beriah Green, Joshua Leavitt, and George Bourne. At least half of the Ohioans were, too: J. A. Pepoon, Horace Bush-

[28] *Liberator,* July 13, 1833.
[29] *Ibid.,* Oct. 12, 1833, and Barnes, *Op. Cit.,* 48.
[30] *Emancipator,* Apr. 15, 1834.
[31] Barnes and Dumond, *Op. Cit.,* I, 177 note, and the *Genius of Temperance,* Dec. 18, 1833. The original manuscript of the "Declaration" in Garrison's own hand is in the Oberlin College Library.

nell—formerly a student at Oneida and Lane, John Monteith, John Jay Shipherd, President C. B. Storrs of Western Reserve College, and, from Cincinnati, Asa Mahan, John Morgan and Theodore D. Weld.[32]

In New York City, repressive measures were to be expected. Certain groups encouraged violence. Col. Watson Webb's *Courier and Enquirer* described the Chatham Street Chapel as "that common focus of pollution,"[33] and to Philip Hone, the diarist, the Tappans and their associates were "a set of fanatics who are determined to emancipate all the slaves by a *coup de main*." On July 4, 1834, a mob broke up a meeting at the Chapel. On the 9th Lewis Tappan's house was attacked, the windows smashed and the furniture burned in the street. Two nights later two new-measures churches (those of Dr. Cox and Mr. Ludlow) were nearly demolished.[34]

A certain element, including many influential persons in the North as well as the South, had determined that the emancipation of the slaves was too dangerous a question to be discussed. Here must be an exception to "Freedom of the Press," "Freedom of Speech," — and academic freedom.

[32]Published in Amos A. Phelps, *Lectures on Slavery and Its Remedy* (Boston—1834). Some evidence of the date of circulation of the declaration may be found in the adhesion of C. B. Storrs who died on Sept. 15, 1833. See page 74 and note.
[33]S. H. Ward, *History of Broadway Tabernacle Church*, 33.
[34]Allan Nevins, Ed., *The Diary of Philip Hone*, I, 134–135.

## CHAPTER XIII

# *THE TEST OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM*

AS THE Anglo-Saxons have debated they have hammered out the rules of social controversy. Their freedoms and liberties have been a chief desideratum of periods of conflict. The political and religious controversies of the seventeenth century settled nothing so much as that Englishmen should have freedom in controversy: of speech, of press, of petition. In every succeeding era of unusually intense debate of vital issues the rules have been redefined, most often strengthened. The era of our struggle for American Independence produced the Virginia Bill of Rights and, finally, the first ten Amendments to the Constitution.

The slavery controversy of the middle of the nineteenth century tested the rules again and established important precedents. Elijah Lovejoy is celebrated today more as a martyr to the freedom of the press than to the cause of abolitionism. John Quincy Adams' battle against the "Gag Rule" was the greatest fight ever fought in America for the right of petition. As freedom of the press and the right of petition were endangered in the heat of the anti-slavery conflict so was academic freedom in colleges. The threat came not from government but from the conservative influences — chiefly business influences — which then, and so often later, have controlled that peculiar American academic phenomenon, the unacademic "Board of Trustees." Most college students of those days seem to have been immature and callow and more likely to lead a cow into the chapel than to insist on discussing great economic, social and political issues. The faculty was likely to center attention pretty much on Greece and Rome and the After-Life. It is not surprising that the great test should have come at Lane Seminary, for there was gathered an unusually mature and serious-minded group of students, led by a genius and inspired by the greatest preacher of the day.

Theodore Weld's zeal for anti-slavery may be traced to the in-

fluence of the eccentric Scotchman, Charles Stuart, just as his piety grew from his contact with Finney. Stuart, born in Jamaica, where he saw slavery at first hand, was a bachelor school teacher in Utica where Weld as a youngster first met him. They served together in Finney's "Holy Band"; Weld was attracted by Stuart's stern and unwavering piety; Stuart saw in Weld the promise of great intellectual and oratorical powers which might be of much service in the reform causes. The close friendship which resulted made of Weld an anti-slavery advocate fully as devoted and much abler than Stuart; the influence of Stuart in the history of American anti-slavery was chiefly felt through Weld.[1] Weld, as we have seen, cooperated with the Tappans in 1831 in preparing the way for the foundation of the American Anti-Slavery Society. In his Southern tour he had privately and discreetly discussed the slave problem with Robinson, Allan, Thome, James G. Birney and others. Before coming to Cincinnati he may have conferred with Arthur Tappan on the importance of converting all these "glorious, good fellows" at Lane to the cause.[2] He had been invited to the organization meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society at Philadelphia in December, 1833, but had been unable to attend. At that meeting he had been appointed one of the first group of four agents of the society.[3]

The auspices seemed very favorable. Weld's influence among his fellows was so overwhelming that anything which he sponsored would be likely to be unanimously accepted. "In the estimation of the class," wrote Dr. Beecher in his *Autobiography*, 'he [Weld] was president. He took the lead of the whole institution. . . . They thought he was a god."[4] The Oneidas at Lane had been under his influence at Whitesboro and as Finneyites were predisposed to any thoroughgoing, benevolent movement. Western Reserve College, Rochester, New York City, and especially the Oneida Institute under Beriah Green furnished stirring and well-known precedents.

From June, 1833, to February, 1834, Weld worked individually among the students to complete the preparation for a final

[1]Barnes, *Op. Cit.*, 13–15, and Barnes and Dumond, *Op. Cit.*, I, xx, 42–44, and 48–49.
[2]Charles Beecher, *Autobiography . . . of Lyman Beecher*, II, 314.
[3]Barnes and Dumond, *Op. Cit.*, I, 121.
[4]Vol. II, 321.

public discussion. The result was that, despite the fact that a colonization society had existed in the seminary from the time of its founding, there was really no opposition worthy of the name. The eighteen evening meetings devoted to the slavery question constituted an anti-slavery revival rather than a debate. The high emotional tone was stimulated by the relation of "experiences" and by the fervid oratory of the revivalist-reformer, Weld.

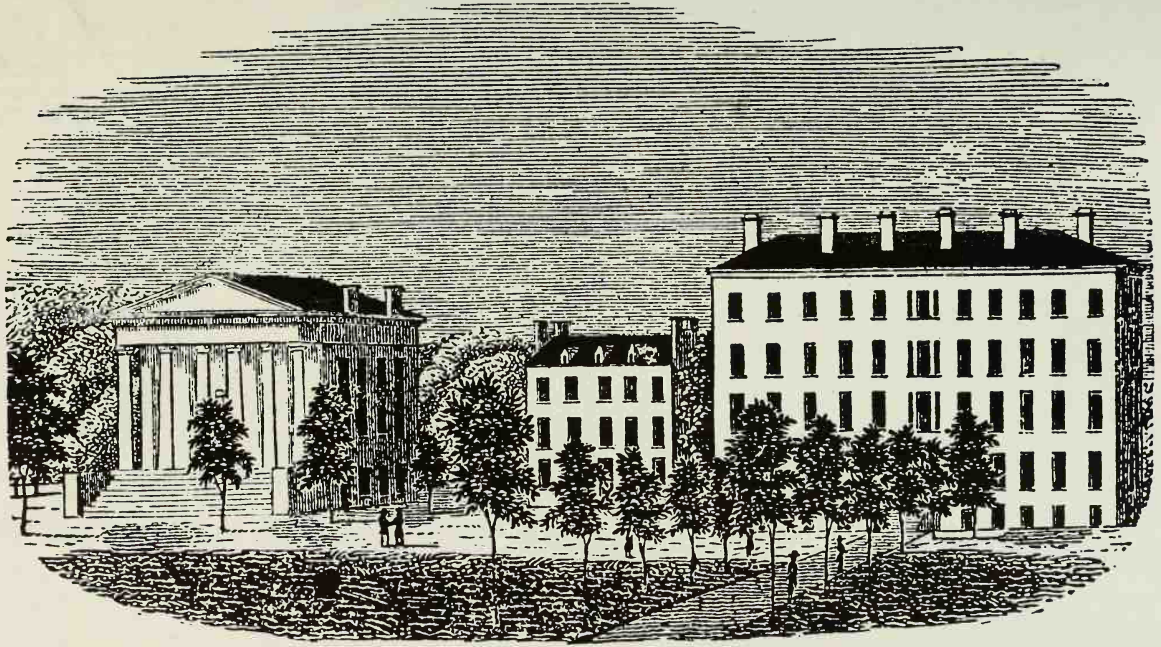
Apparently all the students and all but one of the faculty (Biggs) attended at some time. Beecher, an exponent of compromise and Christian forbearance, somewhat grudgingly granted permission for the meetings. He not only attended some of the discussion, however, but had a written statement of his views, drafted by Catharine Beecher, read to the students. Professor Thomas J. Biggs insisted from the beginning that it was unwise to allow debate on such a dangerous question.[5]

The students were supposed to prepare themselves for the discussion by reading the *African Repository* and other publications of the American Colonization Society as well as the various documents published by the American Anti-Slavery Society. An agent of the former society who had visited Liberia described conditions as he observed them. But the students themselves seem to have occupied most of the time — especially those from the South.

Weld opened the debate with a series of four powerful lectures in favor of immediate emancipation.[6] Then came the eyewitnesses: "Nearly half of the seventeen speakers [who described the condition of the slaves]," wrote Stanton, "were the sons of

[5]It is quite clear that Miss Beecher did not present this statement in person, Barnes' statement to the contrary notwithstanding (*Op. Cit.*, 66–67). See Huntington Lyman's letter of Mar. 4, 1834, in the *Emancipator,* Mar. 25, 1834, and H. B. Stanton's letter of Mar. 10, 1834, in the *New York Evangelist,* Mar. 22, 1834, reprinted in the *Emancipator,* Mar. 25, 1834. The latter is the best account of the debates and is largely followed in the subsequent sketch. See also, however, Augustus Wattles' letter of Mar. 6, 1834 in the *Emancipator,* Apr. 22, 1834. On Biggs' attitude see Biggs to Vail, July 23, 1834 (Lane MSS).

[6]"The first speaker occupied nearly two evenings in presenting facts concerning slavery and immediate emancipation, gathered from various authentic documents. Conclusions and inferences were then drawn from these facts, and arguments founded upon them favorable to immediate abolition, during the next two evenings." This is Stanton's statement. This speaker could have been none other than Weld. It will be noted that he is not called a Southerner, which was always done when there was any slight basis for so doing. The data used must have been the nucleus of the material which was later published in 1839 as *American Slavery As It is.*



LANE SEMINARY

(From Henry Howe, *Historical Collections of Ohio* [Cincinnati—1848])

slave-holders: one had been a slave-holder himself; one had till recently been a slave; and the residue were residents of, or had recently traveled or lived in slave states." They narrated in gruesome detail all of the atrocity stories which later became so familiar to the people of the North. James Thome described the evils of the "peculiar institution" as he had seen it in Kentucky. Huntington Lyman, a Connecticut Yankee[7] who had spent some time in Louisiana, developed the "horrid character" of slavery in that region, telling how the Negroes were often professedly worked to death. James Bradley related the story of his own life, telling how he was brought as a child from Africa on a slave ship and sold to a planter of South Carolina who later moved to Arkansas Territory. There his master died and the slave was allowed to work out to buy his freedom. So, in 1833, despite inadequate preparation he was admitted into the academic department of Lane Seminary. Besides giving his autobiography, Stanton reported that this "shrewd and intelligent black . . . withered and scorched" the pro-slavery arguments "under a sun of sarcastic argumentation for nearly an hour."[8]

After the first nine evenings of debate a vote was taken on the question: "Ought the people of the slave-holding states to abolish slavery immediately?" All voted in the affirmative "except four or five, who excused themselves from voting at all on the ground that they had not made up their opinion. Every friend of the cause rendered a hearty tribute of thanksgiving to God for the glorious issue."

It is clear from the way in which the question was stated that Weld and his associates had no intention of fomenting slave insurrections nor of emancipating the slave through Federal action. Indeed, Stanton declared his belief that the meetings had demonstrated the effectiveness of moral suasion in bringing the South to voluntary emancipation. He felt that it had been irrefutably proved "that southern minds trained and educated amidst all the prejudices of a slave-holding community, can, with the blessing of God, be reached and influenced by *facts and*

[7]He was born in East Haddam, Connecticut, on April 25, 1803. His portrait (in Oberlin College Alumni Records) shows a typical puritan type. Barnes calls him "Lyman of Louisiana," following the statement in the *Emancipator,* as if he were a native of the South (*Op. Cit.,* 67 and 68).

[8]Further data on Bradley's life will be found in the *Oasis* (edited by Lydia Marie Child, Boston—1834), 106–112, and the *Emancipator,* Nov. 4, 1834.

*arguments, as easy as any other class of our citizens.*" It was their plan evidently to abolish slavery by appealing to slave-holders through a nation-wide anti-slavery "revival."

The remaining nine anti-slavery meetings were devoted to discussion of the claims of the colonization movement. All but one of the students present voted "No" to the question which was finally put: "Are the doctrines, tendencies, and measures of the American Colonization Society, and the influence of its principal supporters, such as to render it worthy of the patronage of the Christian public?" The students then formed an anti-slavery society devoted to the "immediate emancipation of the whole colored race within the United States," an end which was to be attained "Not by instigating the slaves to rebellion"; "Not by advocating an interposition of force on the part of the free states"; "Not by advocating congressional interference with the constitutional powers of the States"; but by "approaching the minds of slave holders [with] the truth, in the spirit of the Gospel." The chief offices of the society were given to the young men from south of the river in order to give special prominence to their participation: Allan was president; Robinson, vice-president; even James Bradley was listed among the "Managers."[9]

The students proceeded immediately to make practical application of these anti-slavery principles thus professed. Several of them went out lecturing in behalf of the cause. Thome spoke at the anniversary meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society in New York in May, describing in detail the licentiousness in the South which, he said, was the result of slavery. Stanton also spoke and, in the same month, contributed a 5½-column article on the Internal Slave Trade to the Rochester *Rights of Man*. In mid-June he delivered an anti-slavery lecture in the Rochester First Presbyterian Church.[10] Others went to work "elevating the colored people in Cincinnati." They established a lyceum especially for the Negroes in which regular lectures were given "on grammar, geography, arithmetic, natural philosophy, etc." A circulating library, a regular evening school, three Sabbath Schools, Bible classes for adults and two day schools for boys were begun. Later a "select female school" was established, and

[9]Printed in many periodicals, also as an extra of the *Standard*.

[10]*Emancipator*, May 13, 1834; *Vermont Chronicle*, May 16, 1834; *Rights of Man*, May 24, 1834, and *Rochester Daily Democrat*, June 16, 1834.

other special classes for girls were organized and taught by four volunteers from New York (called "The Sisters"), whose expenses were paid by Lewis Tappan. In this they were assisted by Maria (or Mary Ann) Fletcher, the daughter of Nathan P. Fletcher of Oberlin. Miss Fletcher went to Cincinnati to study in Catharine Beecher's "Western Female Institute," but at the time that she undertook this work she had left the school and was living in the home of Asa Mahan.[11] "About 200 [Negroes] attend school daily," wrote Augustus Wattles in July, "besides Sabbath and evening schools, and lectures are well attended."[12] The students and "the Sisters" also visited among the blacks and mingled with them socially, thus greatly shocking color-conscious Cincinnati. A group of Negroes of both sexes were even invited into the Seminary buildings, having expressed a desire "to see the institution."[13]

The members of the Board of Trustees were mostly solid Cincinnati business men and they found these activities of the students very disturbing. Race feeling was strong in the city; the riots of five years before had not been forgotten. Besides, the merchants, manufacturers and bankers of Cincinnati did about as much business in Kentucky and further south as in Ohio. Clearly they could not afford to have their names associated with an institution which was so publicly identified with abolitionism.[14]

[11]Theodore Weld in a letter from Lane Seminary dated Mar. 18, 1834, quoted from the *New York Evangelist* in the *Ohio Observer*, May 1, 1834,—also quoted in Barnes and Dumond, *Op. Cit.*, I, 132–135; S. Wells *et al.* to Weld in *Ibid.*, I, 178 *et seq.*, and note on page 178; *Ibid.*, I, 194 and 215; John J. Shipherd and Maria (or Mary Ann) Fletcher to N. P. Fletcher, Cincinnati, Dec. 15, 1834 (Treas. Off., File H). On Maria Fletcher see also Esther and J. J. Shipherd to Fayette Shipherd, Nov. [26, 1834] (Shipherd MSS).

[12]Letter dated July 3, 1834, in *Emancipator*, Aug. 26, 1834.

[13]H. B. Stanton [and James Mott] to J. A. Thome, Sept. 11, 1834 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

[14]Seven of the board were ministers (Rev. James Gallaher from Tennessee, Rev. F. Y. Vail, Rev. A. Mahan, Rev. Benjamin Graves, Rev. R. H. Bishop, Rev. Daniel Hayden and Rev. Samuel Crothers), but three were lawyers (N. Wright, I. G. Burnet, George W. Neff); two were general merchants (William W. Green and Daniel Corwin); two were lumber merchants (Stephan Burrows and J. C. Tunis); one was a druggist (Robert Boal); one a grocer (John H. Groesbeck); one a bank cashier (Augustus Moore); one a physician (Dr. James Warren); one the captain of a river boat (Capt. Robert Wallace), and three were manufacturers (James Melindy, a maker of "winnowing machines," William Holyoke, a coachmaker, and William Schillinger, a cooper). It has been impossible to determine the occupations of three: Daniel Wurtz, D. W. Fairbank and John Baker. Dr. Walter Rogers gathered this information for the author from *Directory of 1829 Cincinnati* (Cincinnati—1829); *Cincinnati Directory for the Year 1834* (Cin-

President Beecher considered these student activities unwise and harmful to the institution but hoped to prevent any clash between the shocked townsmen and the zealous students. "If we and our friends do not amplify the evil," he wrote in June of 1834, "by too much alarm, impatience, and attempt at regulation the evil will subside and pass away."[15] Professor Calvin E. Stowe, Beecher's son-in-law, supported him in this position. Professor John Morgan of the academic department of the Seminary was an anti-slavery man and sympathized with the students. In the summer Beecher went East to raise funds and rouse the people of Boston against the Catholics. (A mob burned one monastery.)[16] Stowe and Morgan were also out of town during the vacation, leaving only one member of the faculty on the ground. This was the Rev. Thomas J. Biggs, Professor of Church History and Church Polity, a man who was exceedingly unpopular with Weld and his fellow-students, so unpopular, indeed, that they had attempted to secure his dismissal from the institution.

The first important outside reaction against these activities at the seminary came in an editorial in the Cincinnati periodical, the *Western Monthly Magazine,* in its May issue. In it, James Hall, the editor, himself not yet forty-one years of age, denounced the meddling in such serious matters of "minors, who are at school." Elaborating, he wrote: "We have seen boys at school wearing paper caps, flourishing wooden swords, and fancying themselves, for the moment, endued with the prowess of Hector and Achilles — . . . but this is the first instance, that we have ever known, of a set of young gentlemen at school, dreaming themselves into full-grown patriots, and setting seriously to work, to organize a wide-spread revolution; to alter the constitution of their country; to upset the internal policy of a dozen independent states; and to elevate a whole race of human beings in the scale of moral dignity."[17] In a scorching reply, Weld (thirty years old) pointed out that nine students in the Theolog-

cinnati—1834); David H. Sheffer, *Cincinnati Directory for 1840* (Cincinnati—1840); Charles Theodore Greve, *The Centennial History of Cincinnati* (Chicago—1904) 2 vols., and *History of Cincinnati and Hamilton County* (Cincinnati—1894).

[15]Beecher, *Op. Cit.,* II, 326.

[16]Roy Billington, *The Protestant Crusade* (N. Y.—1938), 73–74.

[17]"Education and Slavery," *Western Monthly Magazine,* II, 266–273 (May, 1834).

ical Department were between thirty and thirty-five and thirty were over twenty-six years old, and charged Hall with trying to raise the mob.[18]

With Beecher, Stowe and Morgan away, the trustees went to work to assuage the rising fury of popular condemnation. Biggs acted as prosecutor. In a letter to Vail written in July, Biggs intimated that he intended to take action. He wrote: "We are a reproach and a loathing in the land. . . . That the offensive thing must be expurgated from the institution is my firm conviction. My firm conviction also it was, that we *never should have permitted* the subject to be introduced within the precincts of the Seminary. I yielded my opinion — and said but little. I now feel it my duty to speak out — be the consequences what they may! The position I take is, that the thing itself must be cleared away, and that the Seminary must regain its original ground of *non-committal* on these subjects."[19] On August 9, 1834, Professor Biggs appeared at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Trustees especially called "to consider the proceedings of the students in relation to the subject of slavery."[20] A special subcommittee was appointed to determine what action ought to be taken.

Beecher and Vail counselled caution and moderation, but Biggs and some of the trustees had other plans. On August 18 Biggs again aired his views to President Beecher:

"I am favoured today with the letter jointly from yourself and Dr. Vail, its contents I have read and reperused with deep interest, . . . and my only regret is that I cannot, in view of facts, *present* and *past,* persuade my mind into sympathy with yours. The evils which I feel and apprehend seem to me to call for anything rather than *narcotics.* . . . Oneida men or any other kind of men, beyond this I regard not."

He continued:

"The public here is calling for some manifesto on the subject from the Trustees. They are not satisfied — and they demand to know whether they are rightly informed, when they hear, that on the borders of all the western & southern slavery, there is

[18]Weld's letter was printed in the *Cincinnati Journal,* May 30, 1834, and was reprinted in Barnes and Dumond, *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld,* I, 136–45.
[19]Biggs to Vail, July 23, 1834 (Lane MSS).
[20]Lane Seminary Trustees, MS Minutes, Aug. 9, 1834.

located at Walnut Hills a concern intended to be the great Laboratory and depot for everything [conceived?] and half-wrought, in New York & elsewhere, by *soi-dissant* abolitionists. The Trustees feel themselves called upon to furnish something to correct and allay this (not unreasonably) excited state of feeling. We have among us, as all know, the Master Spirit of Abolitionism, we have it here in its sublimated state — it has already inflated and intoxicated nearly all our students — the exhilarations make them soar above all our heads, and the principle is now pretty well settled that the one whose head has most capacity for this empyrical gas, why, he's the Model, and the *best theologian,* and best anything else you please. It is now believed to be time to settle the question, 'Who shall govern?' Students? or faculty in concurrence with Trustees?"[21]

The Executive Committee of the trustees "cracked down." The report of the special sub-committee was first received and discussed at a meeting of the Committee on August 16 and adopted at an adjourned meeting on the 20th and ordered to be published. The report argued that "education must be completed before the young are fitted to engage in the collisions of active life," that, therefore, "no associations or Societies among the students ought to be allowed in [the] Seminary except such as have for their immediate object improvement in the prescribed course of studies." Discussion of subjects likely to distract attention from the regular studies should be discouraged at all times, particularly if these subjects were "matter of public interest and popular excitement." The committee recommended that the anti-slavery society should, therefore, be abolished and urged the trustees to adopt rules "discouraging and discountenancing by all suitable means such discussions and conduct among the students as are calculated to divert their attention from their studies, excite party animosities, stir up evil passions

[21]The letter is in the Lane MSS. It, of course, makes quite untenable Barnes' theory (*Antislavery Impulse,* 70–71) that Beecher changed his mind during the summer following the adoption of resolutions by a convention of college executives in New York, and that he instigated the trustees' proceedings by letter. The only supporting evidence, anyway, was in Mahan's reminiscences written forty-seven years later (*Autobiography* [London—1882], 179) and a rumor reported at second hand in the *Friend of Man,* Sept. 15, 1836. Besides, the decision of the Executive Committee of the Lane Trustees on Aug. 20 to postpone definite action until the return of Beecher very definitely implies that they were not sure of the position he would take.

amongst themselves, or in the community, or involve themselves with the political concerns of the country." Final action by the whole body of trustees was postponed because of the absence of President Beecher, and as being unnecessary "as the adoption [and publication] of the foregoing resolution *will sufficiently indicate to the students the course which the Trustees are determined to pursue.*" To make their attitude doubly clear the Executive Committee summarily dismissed Professor John Morgan of the academic department of the Seminary who had taken the side of the students and considered the expulsion of Theodore Weld and of William T. Allan, the president of the anti-slavery society.[22]

The students in the first class at Lane Seminary were not children to be beaten into submission to the pussy-footing tactics of their elders. Early in September one of their number wrote of the committee's report: "It is a document worthy of the ninth century and would do honor to Nicholas!" They hoped that Beecher would take a firm stand when he returned from the East, but they were prepared for action. "We all intend to wait patiently & see the result of the recommendation of the Exec. committee," wrote Henry Stanton to the absent Thome. "If the law requiring us to disband the Anti-Slavery Society, is passed, we shall take a dismission from the Seminary. We shall not stay & break any laws, but shall go quietly, & publish to the world the reasons for thus going, together with the history of the Anti-Slavery cause & movements in Lane Seminary. We shall spread the whole matter before the public, & I trust tell a story that will make some ears tingle. A glorious spirit pervades the institution on this subject. A few, . . . will probably truckle — but the residue, to a single man, will not only have their *names,* but their bodies cast out as evil, before they will hasard for one moment the cause of the oppressed, or yield an inch to the assaults of a corrupt & persecuting public sentiment, or swerve one hair from the great principles which have been the basis of all our operations in regard to Slavery & Colonization. No never — never! If the laws pass, the theological class will probably all go in a body *somewhere* & pursue our studies. We can have money

[22]Lane Seminary Trustees, MS Minutes; Asa Mahan, *Autobiography,* 176–180— G. H. Barnes, *Antislavery Impulse,* 70 *et seq.;* Barnes and Dumond, *Op. Cit.,* I, 137 *et seq.;* etc.

enough to hire good teachers – perhaps Stowe will go with us – Morgan certainly will if we need him. Weld will teach the theology – perhaps! But all these matters are to be settled in full council. Our plan is to have every student here at the commencement of the term & then act together."[23]

On the 10th of October the full Board of Trustees, without waiting for Beecher, ratified the action of the Executive Committee taken on August 20. Fourteen voted aye and only three in the negative: Mahan and two of the elders of his church, William Holyoke and John Melindy. Two peremptory orders were also adopted and issued: dissolving the anti-slavery and colonization societies in the seminary as "tending to enlist the students in controversies foreign to their studies, and to stir up among themselves and in the community, unfriendly feelings and useless hostilities," and delegating to the Executive Committee unlimited authority "to dismiss any student from the Seminary, when they shall think it necessary to do so."[24]

The trustees undertook to explain their attitude on the question of discussion of the slavery issue in general: "The Board consider that the location of the Seminary in the vicinity of a large city & on the borders of a slave holding state, calls for some peculiar cautionary measures in its government; & that the present state of public sentiment on some exciting topics, requires restraints to be imposed, which under other circumstances might be entirely unnecessary. . . . The proceedings of the students have produced the impression in the community that the Seminary is deeply implicated with one particular party on the slavery question; & unless the impression can be removed the prosperity of the Institution will be much retarded, & its usefulness generally diminished."[25]

"Parents and guardians," rejoiced the *Cincinnati Journal* editorially, "may now send their sons and wards to Lane Seminary, with a perfect confidence, that the proper business of a theological school will occupy their minds; and that the discussion and decision of abstract questions, will not turn them aside from the path of duty. . . . There may be room enough in the wide world, for *abolitionism* and *perfectionism,* and many other isms; but

[23]H. B. Stanton to J. A. Thome, Sept. 11, 1834 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).
[24]MS Minutes, Mahan, *Op. Cit.,* 179; the *New York Evangelist,* Nov. 1, 1834.
[25]MS Minutes, Oct. 10, 1834.

a school, to prepare pious youth for preaching the gospel, has not legitimate place for *these.*"[26]

There is some possibility that if the trustees had been willing to wait for Beecher's return from the East the difficulties could have been patched up. Certainly the President was ready to do everything in his power to keep in the Seminary the group of brilliant young men of whom he was so justly proud. Just two days before the Board took the final action he wrote to Weld from Frederick: "They are a set of glorious good fellows, whom I would not . . . exchange for any others. I was glad to hear that to the question what you meant to do, you replied it would be soon enough to decide when you saw what the trustees had done. I hope you will be patient & take no course till after my return."[27] But when he came back to Cincinnati Beecher made the mistake of trying to explain away the action of the trustees. The faculty issued on October 13 a statement, signed by Professors Biggs and Stowe and President Beecher, in which they declared that they saw "nothing in the regulations which is not common law in all well regulated institutions." They insisted on the other hand that they approved of "& will always protect & encourage in this institution free inquiry & thorough discussion for the acquisition of knowledge & the discipline of mind," and "also of voluntary associations of the students for the above objects according to the usages of all literary Institutions & theological Seminaries," and regarded "with favor voluntary associations of students, disposed to act upon the community in the form of Sabbath Schools, Tract, Foreign Missions & Temperance, & other benevolent labors, in subordination to the great ends of the Institution, of which in all instances the Faculty as the immediate guardians of the Institution must be judges."[28] To the students this seemed but "words, *Words,* WORDS." It appeared remarkable to many persons that the professors should see nothing in vesting a committee of the trustees with arbitrary power of expulsion which would "interfere with the appropriate duties of the Faculty or the *rights of students.*"[29] The students regarded

[26]*Cincinnati Journal,* Oct. 10, 1834.
[27]Lyman Beecher to Weld, Oct. 8, 1834, Barnes and Dumond, *Op. Cit.,* I, 170–173.
[28]MS Minutes.
[29]*New York Evangelist,* Nov. 8, 1834.

the statement as little less than an endorsement of the trustees' action by the faculty.

On October 15 twenty-eight students presented a joint request for dismission. Huntington Lyman headed this list which also included Steele, Robert and Henry Stanton, Amos Dresser, Bradley (the Negro), and Hiram Wilson. The next day eleven others, Wattles, Thome, Allan, Whipple, etc., followed suit. Weld submitted an independent "resignation" on the 17th.[30]

Before the formal enactment of the new rules by the trustees the anti-slavery leaders among the students were preparing the story which was to "make some ears tingle." Lyman wrote to Thome on the 4th of October: "Weld has been engaged for several days in arranging and pasting in some facts upon the subject of Abolition so as to be ready for an emergency."[31] He continued: "Several of us have a plan which we wish to submit for your consideration and to invite your cooperation. It is to procure a place where we can study. Get profess Stowe or some one else to mark out for us a course of study. Then to adopt our rules and have our regular recitations and debates and mutual improvements and bone down to study. . . . We shall in that case have the best part of the class with us. There will be Benton & Wells, Streeter, Weed, Stanton, Alvord, Whipple, & Lyman, to which let us add Thome & Hopkins and nothing is wanting to make it a most desirable band. The expenses would be much less than at the Sem and if I am not mistaken the profit would be much greater."

President Beecher worked desperately to save the school. Soon after his return he persuaded the Executive Committee to withdraw their resolution to dismiss Weld and Allan, and early in November he secured a repeal of all of the most objectionable measures which had been adopted by the trustees. But it was too late; the majority of the students had already withdrawn from Walnut Hills and established themselves at Cumminsville, some miles from the city. In December they issued a fiery attack on the action of the authorities at Lane and a defense of their own actions. The kernel of it is, of course, an apotheosis of the right of free speech in literary institutions: "Free discussion being a duty is consequently a right, and as such, is inherent and in-

[30]These documents are in the Lane MSS.
[31]H. Lyman to Thome, Oct. 4, 1834 (O. C. Lib. Misc., MSS).

alienable. It is *our* right. It *was* before we entered Lane Seminary: privileges we might and did relinquish; advantages we might and did receive. But this *right* the institution 'could neither give nor take away.' Theological Institutions must of course recognize this immutable principle. Proscription of free discussion is sacrilege! It is boring out the eyes of the soul. It is the robbery of mind. It is the burial of truth. If Institutions cannot stand upon this broad footing, let them fall. Better, infinitely better, that the mob demolish every building or the incendiary wrap them in flames; and the young men be sent home to ask their fathers 'what is truth?'—to question nature's million voices —her forests and her hoary mountains 'what is truth?' than that our theological seminaries should become Bastiles, our theological students, thinkers by *permission,* and the right of free discussion tamed down into a soulless thing of gracious, condescending sufferance." This appeal and the history of the whole controversy was copied in the press throughout the country. The *New York Evangelist* and similar religious papers ran column after column regarding it. The anti-slavery press also gave it much space. Perhaps this publicity may have had some influence in making the "Rebels" (as they were now called) adamant against all the appeals of Beecher and others to return.[32]

The press was, naturally, sharply divided in its attitude. The conservative *Vermont Chronicle* said: "We can only remark at present, that the principles asserted in the Declaration of the Faculty are those which must be adhered to in all such institutions." The reaction of the *Emancipator* was what was to be expected: "Better that the brick and mortar of Lane Seminary should be scattered to the winds . . . than that the principle should be recognized, that truth is not to be told, nor sin rebuked, nor the rights of bleeding humanity plead for, for fear of a mob."[33]

The friends of the Seminary were also divided. Robert Hamilton Bishop of Miami University, a trustee of Lane who was unable to be present at the meetings, fully approved the rules by letter.[34]

[32]This was, of course, the famous *Statement of the Reasons which Induced the Students of Lane Seminary, to Dissolve Their Connection with That Institution* (Cincinnati–1834).

[33]*Vermont Chronicle,* Nov. 7 and 14, 1834; *Emancipator,* Nov. 11, 1834.

[34]This is perhaps odd, in view of Bishop's later liberal record at Miami. The letter (to Nathaniel Wright, Sept. 16, 1834) is in the Lane MSS.

But the Rev. Dyer Burgess, of the anti-slavery Chillicothe Presbytery, denounced their action and subsequently refused to pay his subscriptions.[35] George Avery of Rochester immediately resigned his financial agency and cancelled his subscription. The next summer he wrote to Vail: "I look upon the conduct of the Trustees as arbitrary, tyrrannical & wicked & that of the faculty as indicating a great want of confidence in God, as time-serving, as governed entirely too much by a desire to please *Men* rather than *God,* in a word as leaving the high and consecrated ground of strait-forward & unbending obedience to God for the low grounds, the fogs & quicksands of worldly wisdom & time-serving expediency."[36] Of course, the Tappans were much disappointed. They kept their promises to the Seminary but had no hesitation in expressing their lack of interest in the school after this. A few years later Arthur Tappan wrote to Beecher: "I thank you for the particulars respecting your Seminary and regret that I cannot feel any sympathy in the happiness you express in its present and anticipated prosperity."[37]

It has sometimes been suggested that the Rebels' grievances had all been redressed and that there was little excuse for their refusing to re-enroll in the Seminary. The promises and protestations of President Beecher do not coincide very well, however, with an address which he delivered at Miami University in the following September. It contains sarcasms at the expense of the rebellious students which might have been copied from James Hall's *Western Monthly Magazine,* and restates in specific terms the Lane trustees' opposition to student discussion of controversial public issues. The "seats of science," he declared, "should be retreats from the responsibilities and toils of life — a neutral territory, respected alike by contending parties," and he was *"convinced that the heat of passion, and the shock of battle can never be united with the quietness of mind, and continuity of attention, and power of heart, indispensable to mental discipline and successful study."*[38]

The students were somewhat dispersed. Two went to Auburn Seminary and four to the Yale Divinity School. James H. Scott

[35]Burgess to Vail, Nov. 29, 1834 (Lane MSS).
[36]Avery to Vail, Nov. 17, 1834, and Aug. 15, 1835 (Lane MSS).
[37]Tappan to Beecher, Jan. 20, 1838 (Lane MSS).
[38]Lyman Beecher, *Address . . . Miami University, Sept. 29, 1835* (Cincinnati—1835), 39–40. Italics are his.

and Joseph D. Gould went to the Western Theological Seminary at Allegheny Town. Andrew Benton went to Miami.[39] Two (Robert L. Stanton and Charles Sexton) ate humble-pie in late October, 1834, and asked for re-admission.[40] Two others (Alexander Duncan, an Oneida, and John A. Tiffany) apparently followed suit at a later date. H. H. Spalding, later the Oregon missionary, and two or three others, had apparently opposed Weld from the beginning and, naturally, continued as members of the institution.[41]

But the nucleus of Oneidas and leaders in the anti-slavery work kept together and established at nearby Cumminsville an informal seminary of their own. Here, from about the first of November on, they studied their favorite subjects, listened to a few lectures on physiology from Dr. Gamaliel Bailey, later editor of the *National Era,* and commuted into Cincinnati to continue their benevolent work among the Negroes. Here they were joined for a while by Theodore J. Keep, who had come out from Auburn Seminary intending to enroll at Lane, and by three more Oneidas: James Parker, William Smith and Benjamin Foltz.[42] Foltz kept a diary which gives some idea of the pious atmosphere which surrounded these zealots in their retreat. He arrived at Cincinnati on September 27, having come by way of Buffalo and Lake Erie to Huron then south to Norwalk and through Columbus and Springfield. The next day was Sunday: "Saw brethren beloved in colored Sabbath School. Heard Br. Mahan preach." He went to Cumminsville on November 1. One day he chopped wood for a widow—"I did it cheerfully. Felt that I did it for her Savior & my Savior." A few days later he "Visited six families to tell of Jesus . . . and distribute tracts." Another time—"Rose very early and devoted all my time

[39]Biographical catalogues of Yale Divinity School, Auburn Theological Seminary and Western Theological Seminary. Scott mentions Gould in a letter to Samuel Dickinson (Jan. 12, 1835) in the Lane MSS. Those who went to Auburn were Calvin Waterbury and Henry Cherry, and to Yale: Charles P. Bush, Amasa C. Frissell, Zerah K. Hawley, and Giles Waldo. Of these eight only two had been Oneidas. On Benton, see Barnes and Dumond, *Op. Cit.,* I, 185.

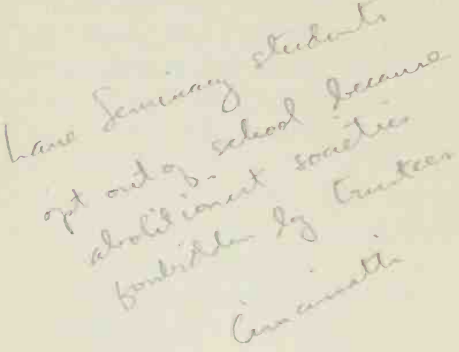
[40]Their request, dated Oct. 21, 1834, is in the Lane MSS.

[41]It is not certain that Duncan was associated with the Rebels at all, but Tiffany's name appears among those asking for dismission on Oct. 15, 1834 (MS in Lane Collection). See also the Lane Theological Seminary, *General Catalogue* (Cincinnati–1881).

[42]Auburn Seminary, *General Biographical Catalogue,* 60; Oneida Institute, *Sketch of the Conditions and Prosperity of the Oneida Institute* (Utica—1837), 17, and Barnes and Dumond, *Op. Cit.,* 184, 185, and 193.

to reading and Prayer." The next evening—"A Person in whose family I had Visited and Prayed called to see me on the subject of Religion, Poor Man was in Liquor." On February 22, 1835, "Past 12 o'clock Night, rose and read 2 of dear Mr. Whitefields sermons."[43] The work with the Negroes in the city was carried on with increasing success. The Sisters—Phebe Mathews, Emeline Bishop, Lucy Wright and Maria Fletcher—continued to cooperate in the teaching.[44] But this halcyon life could not well be permanent; it was not indeed quite satisfactory. There was need of haste to complete their theological education. But where should they go? to Auburn? to Andover?

[43]Diary, 1834–1835, in the Foltz MSS, Oberlin College Library.
[44]Letters from the Rebels to Weld, Dec. 15, 1834, and Jan. 8, 1835, in Barnes and Dumond, *Op. Cit.*, I, 178–194.



## CHAPTER XIV

# *THE GUARANTEE OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM*

IN THE autumn of 1834 the Oberlin Collegiate Institute was tottering, optimistic official pronouncements to the contrary notwithstanding. Old debts were unpaid and few funds were forthcoming for the additional buildings and other necessary equipment. The school had no president and no sufficient teaching staff. In October the Honorable Henry Brown, founder of Brownhelm, resigned as president of the Board of Trustees; he had been the most prominent local man identified with Oberlin.

To take his place Rev. John Keep, now of Cleveland, was appointed, and presided over a meeting on January 1, 1835. Keep, as we have seen, had preached for many years at Blandford, Massachusetts, and, after that, at Homer, New York. While at Homer he had come under the influence of Finney. Besides being a new-measures man he was also an earnest advocate of "female education" and of total abstinence, and a friend of the colored race. Like John Jay Shipherd, he heard the "Macedonian Cry" and went from New York to the Connecticut Western Reserve to help pour onto the "moral putrefaction" of the West the "savory influence of the gospel." In 1833 he left Homer to become pastor of the Stone (now the First) Presbyterian Church in Cleveland, and two years later organized a church in "Ohio City" (the west end of Cleveland) which later became the First Congregational Church of Cleveland, West Side. While still at Blandford, Rev. Mr. Keep had founded a free school for colored people; he had always been an active supporter of the American Colonization Society and had refused an appointment as agent for that organization in 1833. By 1834, however, when he entered the work at Oberlin, he had accepted immediate emanci-

pation without colonization as the proper solution of the evil.[1]

At their meeting of September 23 the Oberlin trustees had taken cognizance of the desperate financial situation of the Institute and resolved, "That it is expedient to take immediate & effective measures by agencies and otherwise to increase the funds of the Institution—", and "That our general Agent [Shipherd] be instructed to take a tour through the different Sections of the country for the purpose of collecting funds for this Institution."[2] Shipherd was a regular subscriber to the *New York Evangelist* and the *Ohio Observer*, in which the Lane affair had been extensively noticed. He must have seen the chance for Oberlin to get students and possibly other aid out of the situation. Very possibly further information may have come to him from Maria Fletcher through her father or from Theodore Keep through his father. Besides, Shipherd, as a member of the Western Reserve Anti-Slavery Society, would have been deeply concerned by the repressive measures adopted against the discussion of immediatism at Lane Seminary. Anyway, he chose Cincinnati as his first objective when he started out on November 24 on this most successful and most significant of all his financial missions in behalf of the institute.[3] The journey to Mansfield over the miry, rutted roads of late autumn he found "slow & tedious," especially with the "baulky sullen horse" provided him by one of the Oberlin colonists. From that point he sent back the wagon and team (without regret) with some supplies purchased or donated along the way: butter, "baskitts," dust pans, bolting cloth and "steel-yards." From Mansfield he proceeded to Columbus where he met young Keep who told him more "about fallen Lane Seminary" and encouraged him to seek aid among the Rebels and their friends.[4] So Shipherd went on to his fateful destination, riding in an uncomfortable mail wagon, packed among the bags of letters and papers.

Shipherd was hospitably received in the home of the Mahans

[1]John Keep, MS Autobiography (Keep MSS); Keep to Weld, Oct. 20, 1834. On his Cleveland pastorates see Julius P. B. MacCabe, *Directory [of] Cleveland and Ohio City, for the Years 1837–38,* page 42, and A. C. Ludlow, *Old Stone Church* (Cleveland—1920).

[2]T. M., Sept. 23, 1834.

[3]"I go south to Cincinnati, & how much further I know not," he wrote to Fayette on Nov. 23, 1834 (Shipherd MSS).

[4]Shipherd to N. P. Fletcher, Nov. 27, 1834 (Treas. Off., File H), and Shipherd to Keep, Dec. 13, 1834 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

and there good fortune came to seek him. After years of more or less unavailing efforts Shipherd saw the great opportunity open up before him. "I believe God has here put my hand on the end of a chain," he wrote to Eliphalet Redington, "linking men & money to our dear Seminary in such a manner as will fill our hearts with gratitude & gladness when it is fully developed."[5] The "glorious good fellows" who had seceded from Lane were very favorable to the idea of coming to Oberlin if Mahan could be secured as President, Morgan as a member of the faculty and Finney to teach theology. The Tappans were clearly more or less definitely committed to financing them wherever they went. Thus might Oberlin secure a whole theological department: students and two teachers, besides a president and much-needed financial backing! Shipherd wrote: "God has kindly opened a door to our infant seminary, wide & effectual, thro' which I sanguinely hope, it will send forth a multitude of well qualified laborers into the plenteous harvest of our Lord."[6]

In the same letter Shipherd asked that Mahan be appointed President of the Oberlin Institute and John Morgan a professor. Shipherd described Mahan as "a revival minister of the millennial stamp" recommended by Finney, himself. He believed him well qualified for the position, "a critical scholar . . . in intellectual & moral philosophy—a department . . . commonly assigned to the President," and "a man of inflexible christian principles who follows the strait line of rectitude while even great & good men vibrate." Mahan would fit in well in the Oberlin Colony, he declared. "His interest in our Institution is intense & he would be willing to toil & sacrifice in its behalf to any extent so would his estimable wife." "In the midst of a city's temptations they have maintained Christian economy & simplicity in their style of living"—in conformity with the principle of the Oberlin Covenant. But, most important of all considerations, the Lane Rebels insisted on his appointment and that of John Morgan, "a man of sterling integrity & unwavering in his maintenance of high moral principle."[7]

Mahan, Morgan and the "Rebels" demanded that as a condition of their coming to Oberlin entire freedom of speech on all

[5]Shipherd to Redington, Dec. 15, 1834 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).
[6]Shipherd to Keep, Dec. 13, 1834 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).
[7]Shipherd to Keep, Dec. 13 and 15, 1834 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

reform issues be guaranteed and that Negroes should be admitted to the Institute along with whites. Before starting east Shipherd had written to Nathan Fletcher:

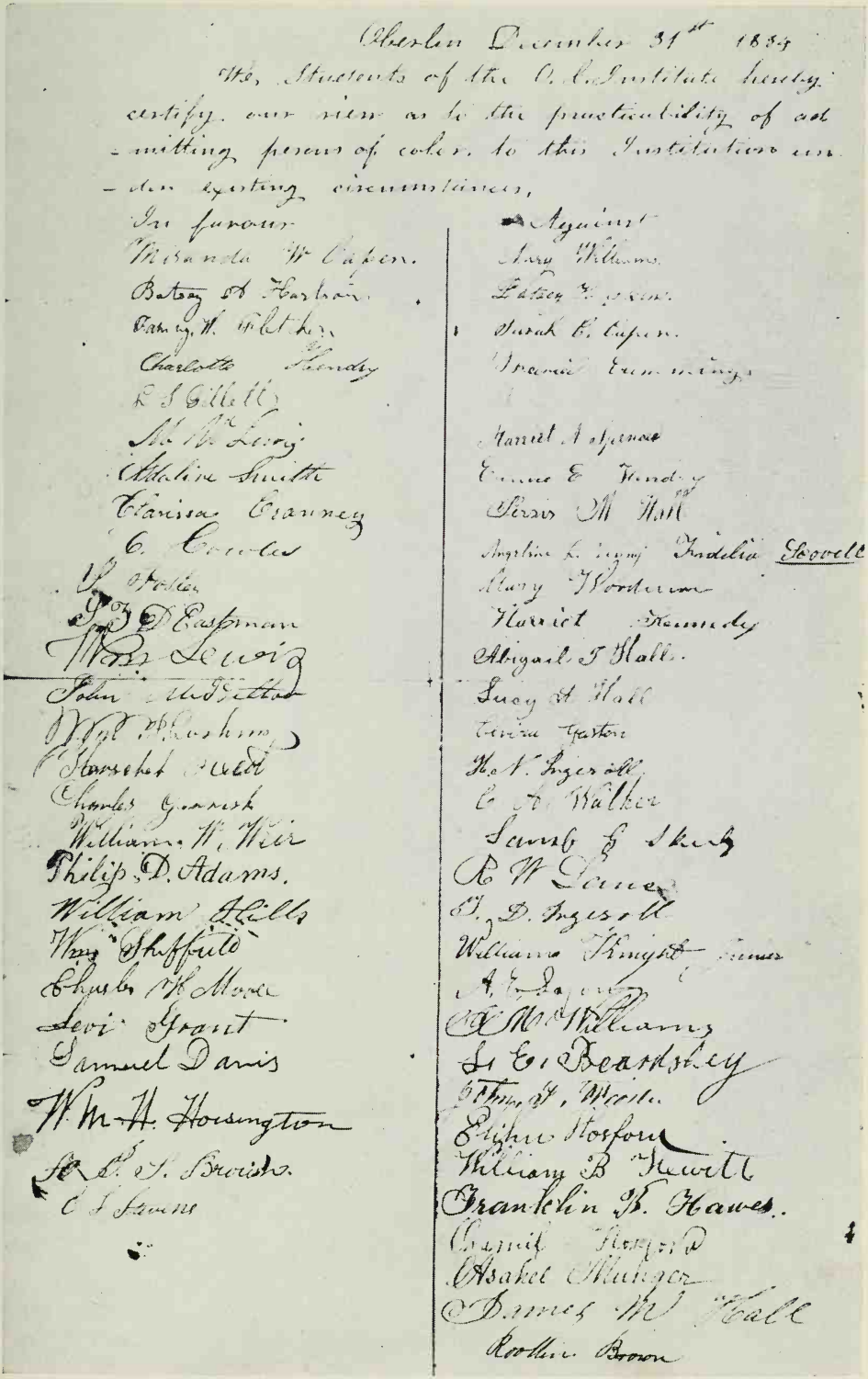
"I desire you at the first meeting of the Trustees to secure the passage of the following resolution, viz. 'Resolved, That students shall be received into this Institution *ir*respective of color.'

"This should be passed because it is *right principle; & God* will bless us in doing right. Also because thus doing right we gain the confidence of benevolent & able men who probably will furnish us some thousands. Moreover, Bros. Mahan & Morgan will not accept our invitations unless this principle rule. Indeed if our Board would violate right, so as to reject youth of talent & piety, because they are *black*, I should have *no heart* to labor for the upbuilding of our Seminary, believing that the curse of God would come upon us as it has upon Lane Seminary, for its unchristian abuse of the poor Slave."[8]

Much to Shipherd's apparent surprise the recommendation aroused a storm of opposition in Oberlin. The slavery question had played no considerable part in the thoughts of the colonists and students of this pious settlement. Suddenly confronted with the suggestion that they receive black men into their idealistic haven, their innate race consciousness seized control of their minds and the whole community was panic-stricken. Two years later one of their number wrote of the situation: "A General panic & dispair seized the Officers, Students & Colonists—P. P. Stewart the Organ of Opposition at once proclaimed Bro. Shipherd Mad!! crazy &c &c & that the School was changed into a Negro School. Its founders would be disappointed and hundreds of negroes would be flooding the School. Despondency brooded with sable distrust o'er almost every Soul, because the Christian patrons made it a condition in their donations that Colourd people should stand equal in the privileges of the Institution—many students said they would leave & Br. Stewart sd. he would not stay."[9] On the last day of December a paper was circulated among the students in an effort to obtain an accurate gauge of

[8]J. J. S. to N. P. Fletcher, Dec. 15, 1834 (Treas. Off., File H). This was not the first time that the question had been raised at Oberlin, however. In a letter to Shipherd, dated Oct. 14, 1834, John M. Sterling of Cleveland made his contribution of $150.00 to Oberlin dependent on students being admitted "irrespective of color."—O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS.

[9]N. P. Fletcher, Critical Letters (MSS), 1837, No. 3 (Misc. Archives).



Oberlin December 31st 1834

We, Students of the O. C. Institute hereby certify our view as to the practicability of admitting persons of color to this Institution under existing circumstances,

In favour

Miranda W. Capen.
Betsey A. Harlan
Fanny W. Fletcher
Charlotte Hendry
L. S. Gillett
M. W. Lewis
Adaline Smith
Clarissa Cranney
C. Cowles
J. Foster
J. D. Eastman
Wm Lewis
John McGillow
Wm Hoshing
Herschel Reed
Charles Garrish
William W. Weir
Philip D. Adams.
William Hills
Wm Sheffield
Charles H. Moore
Levi Grant
Samuel Davis
W. M. H. Hoisington
S. P. T. Brown.
C. J. Stevens

Against

Mary Williams
Betsey [illegible]
Sarah C. Capen.
Francis Cummings
Harriet N. Spencer
Emma E. Hendry
Persis M. Hall
Angeline L. Henry Fidelia Scovell
Mary Wordman
Harriet Kennedy
Abigail T. Hall.
Lucy A. Hall
Elvira Gaston
H. N. Ingersoll
C. A. Walker
Sarah G. Sherry
R. W. Lane
T. D. Ingersoll
William Knight Junior
A. E. Sayers
A. McWilliams
L. E. Beardsley
John H. Weeks
Elihu Hosford
William B. Hewitt
Franklin K. Hawes.
Cyrus Hosford
Asahel Munger
James M. Hall
Rollin Brown

THE STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE "AS TO THE PRACTICABILITY OF ADMITTING PERSONS OF COLOR"—1834

(Original in the Miscellaneous MSS, Oberlin College Library)

their opinion. It read: "We, Students of the O. C. Institute hereby certify our view as to the practicability of admitting persons of color, to this Institution under existing circumstances." On the left-hand side was a column marked "In favor"; on the right a column marked "Against." The number of names "against" was 32; the number "in favor" 26. Mary Lyon's nephew and Mary Ann Adams, later Principal of the Female Department, were among those who voted in the negative.[10] Only six young ladies voted for the admission of Negroes and fifteen voted against it; the young men, on the other hand, favored it by a vote of twenty to seventeen.

The trustees were to meet on the first day of January. The feeling was so intense that it was deemed desirable not to meet in the colony. Notices were therefore sent out on the 29th of December announcing that the meeting would be held in Elyria.[11] At the last moment an effort was made by a number of Oberlinites to bring the trustees back to the colony by addressing a petition to them:

"Whereas there has been and is now among the Colonists & Students of the O. C. Institute a great excitement in their mind in consequence of a resolution of Bro. J. J. Shipherd to be laid before the board—respecting the admission of people of colour into the Institute and also of the board meeting at Elyria

"Now your petitioners feeling a deep interest in the O. C. Institute and feeling that every measure possible should be taken to quell the alarm, that there shall not be a root of bitterness spring up to cause a division of interest or feeling (for an house divided against itself can not stand). Thereupon your petitioners respectfully request that your Hon body will meet at Oberlin that your deliberation may be heard and known on the great and important question in contemplation. We feel for our Black brethren. We feel to want your counsels and instructions—we want to know what is duty—and God assisting us we will lay aside every prejudice and do as we shall be led to believe God would have us to do."

The petition was signed by 32 (male) colonists and students,[12]

[10]Original in O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS.

[11]John Keep to N. P. Fletcher and E. Redington, Dec. 29, 1834 (Treas. Off., File A).

[12]"Petition to Trustees Re *Colored Students*" in Misc. Archives.

but it was ineffective, the trustees holding their important meeting at Elyria as intended. There, in a meeting characterized by one member of the Board as full of "rancour & malevolence,"[13] Mahan and Morgan were unanimously elected, but the motion to admit Negroes was tabled. "Whereas," runs the statement in the minutes, "information has been received from Revd. John J. Shipherd, expressing a wish that students may be received into the Institution irrespective of color—therefore 'Resolved That the Board do not feel prepared till they have other and more definite information on the subject to give a pledge respecting the course they will pursue in regard to the education of the people of Color: wishing that this institution should be on the same ground in respect to the admission of students with other similar institutions of our land.' "[14]

In the meantime, without waiting for an answer to his proposals from the trustees at Oberlin, Shipherd had started east with Mahan to secure financial aid, the support and adhesion of Charles G. Finney, and his acceptance of the theological professorship. Shipherd had, since at least the early spring of 1834, been considering applying for funds to the Tappans.[15] Now was a most favorable opportunity. En route up the Ohio he wrote to his brother from Gallipolis where he had landed for the Sabbath:

"I hope to be in New York next Saturday night or Monday night at farthest. . . . Br. Mahan Pastor of the 6th Ch. in Cincinnati is with me as an Assistant Agent for our dear Institute, and it is highly essential that we should be in New York. . . .

"Br. Mahan has expressed his readiness to accept & a confidence that br. Morgan will also accept. Some twenty theological students who have left Lane Sem. on account of its *gag* laws; among whom is br. T. D. Weld, say that if brs. Mahan and Morgan join the Faculty of our Institute, they shall join the pupils. Doct. Beecher has said that these men did right in leaving the Seminary, & called them a company of 'Glorious good fellows' &c—Moreover bros. Finney, Arthur Tappan & others in New York have offered some thousands for the establishment of a Seminary where these young men & others can enjoy the liberty

[13]N. P. Fletcher, *Op. Cit.*, No. 3.

[14]T. M., Jan. 1, 1835. Quite clearly the difficulty lay in the fear of the association of Negro men and white girls.

[15]Fayette Shipherd to J. J. S., Mar. 24, 1834 (Treas. Off., File H.).

of *free discussion;* & these brethren say that they will advise the N. Y. brethren to turn all in at Oberlin & engage their energies for its upbuilding. Thus dear br. I trust God has put my hand on a golden chain which I shall be able to link to Oberlin & thro' it bind many souls in holy allegiance to our Blessed King.

"We hope Br. Finney will become Prof. of Theology at Oberlin. Lane Seminary I regret to say is down, & Doct. Beecher with it. Oh why did he confer with flesh & blood! Why not dare to do what he acknowledged to be *right!* He has evidently been guilty of *duplicity*, & his sun which I hoped would enlighten this valley & set serenely in the West, will I fear go down in a cloud. 'Cease ye from men'!"[16]

Certainly the conjunction of circumstances was remarkable and it is not surprising that minds of Oberlin accustomed to look for providences should have deemed it providential.

The "Rebels" in Cumminsville were ready. Stanton wrote to Weld early in January: "*As to Oberlin—Study—next summer &c.*, We have had no formal expression of opinion since your letter arrived, but we like the plan well. Brother Finney *must* go to O. It is the very kind of contact we need. So good, and rare too, in its *moral* characteristics. Our time expires here first of April. Ought we to go to O. then? We must spend the remainder of our course together some where! Will it be possible for you to be with us next year? Even 6 months of your contact would be invaluable to us. With Finney, Mahan & Morgan!!" James Thome, of Kentucky, concurred: "I hope the Oberlin enterprise will carry. It suits my *wishes,* for I believe it will suit my *wants.*" William Allan, another Southerner, likewise approved: "This Oberlin plan, however, has opened up a new train. If you & Finney should go there I would try if possible to go with the rest. That, with me, will be putting on the capstone—I shall have passed the rubicon if I should go to an institution where abolition is concentrated—at the head of which is that arch-heretic Finney."[17]

Stanton and Whipple wrote a joint letter to Finney a few days later expressing their deep interest "in the cause of theological education at the West."[18] They saw the region in a desperate

[16]J. J. S. to Fayette Shipherd, Dec. 22, 1834 (Shipherd MSS).

[17]Stanton, Allan, Thome, Whipple *et al.* to Weld, Jan. 8, 1835, Barnes and Dumond, *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld,* I, 184–194.

[18]Stanton and Whipple to Finney, Jan. 10, 1835 (Finney MSS).

plight. "The harvest of the great valley is rotting & perishing for lack of *laboring men*. The spiritual death in our churches is alarming. The impenitent West is rushing to death, unresisted & almost unwarned. The whole Valley is over-run with antinomianism, Campbelliteism, Universalism & Infidelity—while Catholicism is fast taking possession of all our strong holds & is insidiously worming itself into the confidence of the people, & undermining the very foundations of pure religion. And the orthodox are quareling among themselves." They saw only one solution: there must be a great revival, such a revival as could be produced only by "a new race of ministers" educated at a seminary "established on high moral ground, . . . & decided in its revival spirit" and its support of the "great and glorious reforms." No such seminary, they felt, existed at that time in the West. Certainly Lane Seminary "governed by a time serving expediency,—by a subserviency to popular prejudice & opinions" was "ill adapted to fit its pupils for warring with the sins & enormous evils of a corrupt & corrupting age." A new Western theological school must be founded to meet the pressing need.

Oberlin and Finney offered the answer. Oberlin was strategically located, and Finney was the man, if any existed, who could train a band of earnest young men to save the Godless West. "Our eyes," continued Stanton and Whipple, "have for a long time been turned toward you, as possessing peculiar qualifications to fill a professorship in such an institution. Holding & teaching sentiments which we believe are in accordance with the Bible, & having been called by God to participate more largely in the revivals of the last 9 years than any other man in the church, we could not but fix our attention on you as one whom God had designated for such a work. . . . Recognizing these truths, & having full confidence in your qualifications, we strongly desire to become your pupils. . . . We cannot but think that the Providence of God directly calls upon you to become the professor of theology in that institution [Oberlin]. If you should go there, nearly or quite all the theological students who left Lane, would place themselves at once under your instruction." How much after his own heart were these young men! Shipherd, or Finney himself, might have expressed his opinion of the Western situation in much the same language.

Now for some months Finney had been considering retiring

from his strenuous duties in New York City, so that the new invitation from the West came at an opportune moment. His trip to the Mediterranean had definitely not improved his health. His friends feared that continuous preaching in the city in the future would surely kill him. The Tappans had suggested that the inspired invalid might go to Cumminsville and complete the preparation of the Lane Rebels for the ministry; they would bear all the expense. But Finney had decided against this proposal early in November.[19] Then, in mid-January, Shipherd and Mahan arrived in New York with their invitation to Oberlin, and the letter from Stanton and Whipple, representing the Rebels, came to support them.

The interplay of forces between the Tappans, Leavitt, William Green, Dimond, Shipherd and Mahan around Finney cannot be reconstructed at this late hour. But the decision was made promptly, thanks evidently partly to the conjunction of circumstances and partly to the persuasive powers of Shipherd, who saw that the supreme moment of opportunity for his beloved Oberlin had arrived, and of the Tappans, who were deeply interested in the education of the Rebels. The result was beyond anything that the first founders of Oberlin had dared dream of. Arthur Tappan subscribed $10,000; and his associates, Lewis Tappan, Dimond, Green and others, agreed to pay eight professors six hundred dollars annually—all on condition that Finney be appointed Professor of Theology. Finney in turn agreed to accept the appointment on the condition that the trustees allow him to spend three or four months each winter preaching in New York and agree to "commit the internal management of the institute entirely to the Faculty, inclusive of the reception of students."[20]

Unless the Oberlin trustees decidedly revised their stand on the question of the admission of Negro students the whole structure must collapse. Finney wrote to the Rebels: "We do not wish the Trustees to hold out an Abolition or an Anti-abolition flag but let the subject alone for the faculty to manage."[21] Writing to Finney, John Morgan denounced the trustees' resolution: "I do

[19]Finney to Mrs. Finney, Nov. 10, 1834, and *Memoirs*, 332.

[20]Shipherd to the Trustees of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute, Jan. 19, 1835 (Original in the Misc. Archives).

[21]C. G. Finney to H. B. Stanton, Jan. 18, 1835 (copy in Finney's hand in Finney MSS).

not see how consistent abolitionists can give either their money or personal labours & influence to Oberlin till the trustees are 'prepared' to rescind this enactment & do justice to their coloured brethren whether other institutions do so or not. . . . I am sure that Weld & the leaders from Lane will not think of going to Oberlin while this resolution stands. Even Lane Seminary did not assume this odious attitude."[22] The Lane Rebels took the same stand. One of them wrote to Weld: ". . . Saw a notice of the request of Shipherd that Trustees should pass Res. to admit into Col without respect of Colour. The board Res. not [to] act upon it without further information, declaring it to be their intention to have their Institution stand on the same ground as other literary institutions in the land.—This is not enough in these times, do write to New York & tell Mahan & Morgan not to accept without having that thing settled."[23] Everything depended on a change of front by the trustees.

Shipherd wrote two elaborate epistles to Oberlin in a desperate effort to bring about a change in the feeling of the community and the trustees on the question of the admission of colored students and to secure the acceptance of Finney's condition. One letter, written in New York and dated January 27, 1835, was addressed to the Church;[24] the other, written the week before and including a full statement of the situation at New York, was addressed to the trustees of the Institute.[25]

Shipherd expressed deep disappointment at the trustees' previous decision—"surprising & grievous to my soul." "I did not desire you to hang out an abolition flag," he continued, "or fill up with filthy stupid negroes; but I did desire that you should say you would not reject promising youth who desire to prepare for usefulness because God had given them a darker hue than others." It was generally agreed, he pointed out, that emancipated Negroes ought to be educated in order to prepare them for the proper exercise of their freedom. He reminded the trustees that other institutions had admitted Negroes to full privi-

[22]Jan. 13, 1835 (Finney MSS).

[23]George Whipple *et al.* to Weld, Jan. 8, 1835 (Weld MSS). Barnes and Dumond (*Op. Cit.*, I, 194) have a slightly different reading.

[24]J. J. S. to N. P. Fletcher, Church Clerk, Jan. 27, 1835 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS). This letter is quoted in part by Fairchild (*Op. Cit.*) and Leonard (*Op. Cit.*). It is historically less significant and less detailed than the letter to the trustees.

[25]Shipherd to Trustees, Jan. 19, 1835 (Misc. Archives).

leges: Western Reserve College, Princeton and even Lane Seminary. Students who were so pharisaical as to object to association with Negroes would not be *forced* into their company, and the danger of "amalgamation" (intermarriage between white and colored students) he declared to be wholly illusory. Besides, Shipherd held that the admission of students irrespective of color was eternally right and he would insist upon it for that reason despite any considerations of "worldly expediency."

But, after all, the admission of Negroes was not the crux of the matter. "The difficulties [at Lane]," he recognized, "did not grow out of the reception of colored students," "but out of the Trustees' interference with the Students' right of free discussion, & those matters which belong to the Faculty to manage." In order to forestall any possible future unwarranted interferences by the Oberlin trustees in the internal affairs of the Oberlin Institute Shipherd insisted on the acceptance of Finney's condition. He threatened to resign if the trustees would not guarantee "that the Faculty shall control the internal affairs of the institute & decide upon the reception of students."

To consider this ultimatum, a special meeting of the trustees was called to meet at Shipherd's house in Oberlin on February 9. This was another hectic session, "riotous, turbulent & filled with detraction [and] slander."[26] Nine members of the Board, including Keep, the newly appointed president, gathered at the appointed place early in the evening; Shipherd's letter was read and "after some discussion and remarks, prayer was offered & the Board adjourned" to meet the next morning. Nathan P. Fletcher, an ardent abolitionist, and three other members favored the adoption of the measure sponsored by Shipherd and Finney; Philo P. Stewart, also supported by three of the trustees, opposed. John Keep, ardent Finneyite and friend of Weld and, as we have seen, an abolitionist, cast the deciding vote for the proposition.[27] The resolution passed is almost in Finney's own

[26]Keep to Stewart, Pease and Fletcher, Jan. 29, 1835 (Treas. Off., File A), and N. P. Fletcher, Critical Letters, No. 3.

[27]John Keep to Finney, Mar. 10, 1835 (Finney MSS). "The division in the Board," wrote Keep, "is occasioned by the *alleged* impropriety of permitting blacks to be in the same school with the whites. But the prime object of the movement (am I right?) is I suppose to train in a better manner for the ministry, holding yourselves ready to receive applicants irrespective of color—not as you are *reported,* to congregate such a mass of negroes at Oberlin as to darken the whole atmosphere."

words and settled the matter satisfactorily for him, for Shipherd, for the Lane Rebels and for the Tappans. It required a later misinformed and unsympathetic generation to discover that the trustees' action was "staggering and inconsequent." There is nothing ambiguous about it; it is straightforward and clear:

"*Resolved* That the question in respect to the admission of students into this Seminary be in all cases left to the decision of the Faculty & to them be committed also the internal management of its concerns, provided always that they be holden amenable to the Board & not liable to censure or interruption from the Board so long as their measures shall not infringe upon the laws or general principles of the Institution."[28] Mahan, Finney, Morgan, etc., were to be the faculty. With this faculty controlling the "admission of students" and "internal management" there was no danger that Negroes would be excluded nor that the repressive measures enacted at Lane could ever be forced upon Oberlin. Freedom of students and faculty from trustee meddling in "internal affairs" was thus a basic principle in the new Oberlin.

Important as was the decision to admit Negroes, in view of the great contribution which Oberlin was to make toward the education of the colored race, it was at the time of secondary significance. Oberlin was not the first college to admit Negroes. As we have seen, Shipherd, himself, cited a number of examples of Negroes who had attended other schools and colleges.[29] The chief concern of the Lane Rebels, of Morgan, of Mahan, of Finney was not that Negroes should be admitted, but that there should be freedom of discussion of the anti-slavery question and other social and moral problems.

[28]T. M., Feb. 10, 1835. Leonard, Fairchild and Barnes are mistaken in their selection of the resolution which gave Negroes access to Oberlin. The resolutions referred to by them (F and G in the minutes) are merely a supplementary expression of sentiment on the question of Negro education. See Leonard, 144–145, Fairchild, 64, Barnes, 232. Prof. Finney wrote a formal acceptance of the position after his arrival in Oberlin in which he restated the conditions: that he have yearly leaves of absence to preach in New York or elsewhere, that sufficient funds be secured "to put the Institution beyond the pressure of pecuniary embarrassments," and "that the Trustees give the internal control of the school into the hands of the Faculty."

[29]John B. Russwurm, a Negro, graduated from Bowdoin in 1827 (W. W. Brewer, "John B. Russwurm" in the *Journal of Negro History*, XII, 413–422 [Oct., 1928]). Edward Mitchell, a graduate of Dartmouth in 1828, is said to have been colored (*Oberlin Evangelist*, Oct. 8, 1836). A Negro is said to have entered Western Reserve College in 1832 (Carroll Cutler, *A History of Western Reserve College . . .* [Cleveland—1876], 43).

## CHAPTER XV

# *BOOM TIMES AT OBERLIN*

ASIDE from the money promised by the friends of the slave and the supporters of Finney in New York, Oberlin's wealth in the things of this world was small. John Keep stated the situation clearly in a letter to Finney: "Now then as to funds, Brother, we (trustees) have none, except the land & buildings etc. at Oberlin, say from 20 to 35 thousand dolls. We have not the money to *build* or support teachers. . . . The Board of Trustees cannot go on in this matter, only to act as the *legal* organ & do what N. Y. friends propose, in the present stage of the business. Now the whole enterprise is in the hands of these N. Y. men, with Br. S., Mahan, & yourself. Hold on to it well & see that it do not fail."[1]

Arthur Tappan had promised to give $10,000 and, later on, to lend $10,000 more for buildings and other immediate needs. A Professorship Association was formed, a sort of living endowment, a group of the New York City brethren (William Green, Jr., I. M. Dimond, Lewis Tappan and others) agreeing to pay the salaries ($600 per year) of eight professors. The association was to be given continuity by the appointment of a new member whenever any one of the old members died. No wonder Shipherd was disturbed when this association threatened to go on the rocks when it was yet hardly out of port. Lewis Tappan, it seems, doubted Finney's attachment to anti-slavery principles and threatened to withhold his subscription to the association. Shipherd called the subscribers together and, after a long evening of discussion, it was determined "to hold on in the name of the Lord" and stand "fast whatever gales may blow." The Founder wrote to Keep: "This meeting has shown us our foundation and greatly strengthened it."[2] Arthur Tappan was the financial rock

[1]Keep to Finney, Mar. 23, 1835 (Finney MSS).

[2]Shipherd to Keep, Apr. 3, 1835 (Keep MSS), and to Fayette Shipherd, Apr. 1, 1835 (Shipherd MSS). Again in May Lewis Tappan was expressing his doubts of Finney's anti-slavery zeal.—L. Tappan to Shipherd May 5, 1835 (O. C. Lib.

on which the new Oberlin was to stand. By the end of the first week in October, 1835, he had supplied $17,251.13 to the Institute, $10,000 as a loan, secured by three notes signed by colonists, and the remainder representing that part of his gift of $10,000 which had so far been needed for the construction of the new dormitory, Tappan Hall.[3]

Though Oberlin gained friends among the anti-slavery leaders she also made enemies among the large majority who opposed any agitation of this question and among those who disliked Finney's methods. Benjamin Woodbury, Oberlin's financial agent in New England, wrote a resounding protest against the new program as early as the middle of February:

"My fears are that the appointment of Mr. Finney as professor of Theology has had an influence on the subscriptions. A gentleman (Minister) told me yesterday that a clergyman of his acquaintance had collected a hundred dollars for Oberlin but was withholding it until it should be known who would be the Theol. Prof. I do think that this appointment, if it be one, is exceedingly impolitic. Mr. Finney cannot be a suitable man for that place, he has had no systematic course of instruction or study for this. New Eng. is full of men who are entirely qualified and that too in the sense of the community—and men too who are not committed any way to their injury or the injury of the Institution. . . . The naming of Mr. Finney is nearly destruction to Oberlin in New England. . . . I Pray God to guide and save Oberlin—Again I *must say,* to all here that Oberlin is *not* and *will not* be committed to Anti-Slavery or any other party of men. The Inst. must be *open* and *free*—'Free trade and sailors rights entangling alliances &c.' or it will be good for nothing. The theology of N. E. is not Finnyism nor is it moraly right to place Finney in at the head of that Inst. It is not tested, it is too immature, crude and denunciatory. . . .

"Oberlin had before enemies enough for one Semny. Now they will increase ten fold—and it is *unnecessary.*"[4]

Misc. MSS). The reports of the Professorship Association (Oct. 9, 1835, and Apr. 1, 1836) give evidence of the membership and the amounts actually contributed. (Misc. Archives) Some additional funds were secured from Finney men in other parts of the country, men such as George A. Avery and Aristarchus Champion of Rochester. *Cf.* Avery to Burnell, Mar. 14, 1836 (Misc. Archives).

[3]Arthur Tappan to Levi Burnell, Oct. 6, 1835, and to Shipherd, Oct. 1, 1835 (Treas. Off., File I).

[4]Benjamin Woodbury to N. P. Fletcher, Feb. 12, 1835 (Treas. Off., File J).

When Shipherd went to Boston in April he was able to secure some small subscriptions at a meeting of prominent abolitionists. Samuel J. May presided and George Thompson, of England, introduced a resolution: "That this meeting having heard with great pleasure & satisfaction the interesting statements made by the Rev. Mr. Shipherd relative to the history and prospects of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute, Ohio, the principal objects of which are the education of young men for the Christian Ministry, and youth of both sexes for the work of School teachers, *irrespective of color,* cordially recommends it to the *confidence* & support of the Christian public." A committee was appointed to receive donations and May, Thompson, Amasa Walker and a few others made some subscriptions.[5] In most places Shipherd found, however, that many people had been turned against Oberlin by the late developments. "Finneyism, Abolitionism, etc. are excuses of multitudes for not giving funds," he wrote. "But none of these things move me. I expected difficulties & hindrances & tribulations, but success in the end, & the privilege of doing immense good." In Philadelphia Shipherd and Finney together could not collect enough to pay their railroad fares back to New York. "The city of brotherly love is filled with contentions to the exclusion of benevolence, & as the O. C. Institute is to afford an assylum for the rebellious Students late at Lane Sem. it ought not to be sustained &c.—"[6] Oberlin's chief hope would be in the Tappans and Finney's other friends in New York.

It was to be expected that little time would be lost before Oberlin's great *coup* would be announced to the world, but it is a little surprising to find that the announcement was made before the final agreement was reached! At least a week before the trustees' meeting of February 10, the public was informed through various religious papers that Mahan had accepted the presidency, that ten thousand dollars had been received for buildings, eight professorships had been endowed and that Finney was expected to become Professor of Theology.[7] This was hardly true at the time, but Shipherd's optimistic impetuosity in making the statement was, as we have seen, soon justified. In March it was possible

[5]"Minutes of Meeting in relation to Oberlin Ins. held Apr. 8, 1835 with a Subn. list" (MS in Misc. Archives).

[6]Shipherd to Fayette Shipherd, Apr. 1, 1835 (Shipherd MSS).

[7]*Ohio Observer,* Feb. 5, 1835. This statement was copied from the *New York Evangelist,* the date of issue of which must have been several days before.

to report that Finney and Morgan had accepted the positions tendered them and that the effort to secure funds was progressing successfully, especially through the beneficence of the Tappans and others in New York.[8] Early in April the reading public was informed that: "The Rev. Asa Mahan, President of this Institution, Rev. Charles G. Finney, Prof. of Theology, and the Rev. John Morgan, Prof. Rhetoric, are expected to enter upon their official duties at Oberlin, about the first of May next."[9] This expectation was not quite fulfilled. It was the middle of May when Shipherd (after a narrow escape from going over Niagara Falls in a steamboat[10]) came back to Oberlin and wrote to his brother: "Praised be the Lord that I have returned home in peace & met my dear family & people generally in health. . . . Loved Esther met me at the door with another boy three weeks old—called *'James'*. The people gathered around me in love clusters. Even br. Stewart, who withstood me so strangely last winter, met me with a kiss which I never saw him give to his wife. We have a good agent in my place. President Mahan is *the* man—the gift of God we all believe. So we all think the Lane Sem. seceders are not 'rebels' but the choicest of Zion's sons. Bros. Finney & Morgan are expected here today."[11]

The new faculty was inaugurated at the anniversary exercises held on the first Wednesday of July in the big tent given by Finney's New York friends.[12] "It covers an area sufficient for the accommodation of from two to three thousand people . . . ," wrote a witness of the ceremony. "Over its top streams a blue flag, upon which is inscribed *HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD.* In the objects aimed at, it is supposed this Tent more nearly resembles 'that which the Lord pitched and not man' than any which has been set up since the days of Moses." "After prayer, the Rev. Mr. Keep, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, delivered to the

[8]*New York Evangelist,* Mar. 21, 1835, and *Ohio Observer,* Apr. 2, 1835.
[9]*New York Evangelist,* Apr. 11, 1835.
[10]C. W. Sherwood to John Sherwood, May 12, 1835 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).
[11]Shipherd to Fayette Shipherd, May 17, 1835 (Shipherd MSS). It was at this time that Frederick Hamlin became general agent, with Dardanus Bishop as his clerk.
[12]This tent was intended not only for use in Oberlin but for revival work throughout the adjacent area of the Great Valley. An item regarding it appeared in the *New York Evangelist* for May 23, 1835. "Tent for Mr. Finney.—This tent has been completed, and was yesterday forwarded from this city to Mr. Finney at Oberlin. It covers 300 feet of ground, will hold 3000 people, and cost $700. The expense is defrayed by a number of gentlemen in this city."

President and Professors their charge, and presented them with a copy of the charter of Oberlin Collegiate Institute. Rev. Asa Mahan was inaugurated President and adjunct professor of Theology. Rev. Charles G. Finney, professor of Theology. Rev. Mr. Morgan, professor of Literature of Bible and Church History. President Mahan in his address gave an exposition of his views of the best course of study to be pursued at the Institute." Mr. Finney then delivered an address attacking the usual type of theological education as deficient and even harmful. The character of theological education, therefore, he declared "must be altered." "The exigencies of the church and of a world lying in wickedness demanded it."[13] The services were long but, according to Shipherd, not tedious. He wrote in the *Evangelist,* "The audience hung upon their lips for hours, without indicating a desire through weariness to drop off." The next day Shipherd was, himself, installed as pastor of the Church. Finney preached the sermon of installation.[14] So was the new epoch in Oberlin formally begun.

George Clark, the first Lane Rebel to arrive, came with Mahan; others soon following. Thirty-two of them attended some department of Oberlin at one time or another.[15] Of the Cincinnati "Sisters," Maria Fletcher, of course, returned to her home in Oberlin. Phebe Mathews came to Oberlin in the summer of 1836, where she married the Rebel, Edward Weed, in the fall. Neither Mr. or Mrs. Weed ever enrolled at the Institute but they made their home in Oberlin for a year and a half while Mr. Weed was travelling in Ohio as an anti-slavery lecturer.[16] Theodore Weld,

[13] *Ohio Observer,* July 9, 1835.

[14] Shipherd in the *New York Evangelist,* July 18, 1835, and *Ohio Observer,* July 16, 1835.

[15] *Oberlin Review* (XVI, 93), Jan. 9, 1889. The Rebels who came to Oberlin were: William T. Allan, John W. Alvord, Courtland Avery, Enoch N. Bartlett, James Bradley, Lorenzo Butts, Uriah Tracy Chamberlain, George Clark, Charles Crocker, Amos Dresser, Hiram Foote, David S. Ingraham, Deodat Jeffers, Huntington Lyman, Alexander McKellar, Israel Mattison, Lucius H. Parker, Joseph H. Payne, John T. Pierce, Samuel F. Porter, C. Stewart Renshaw, Munson S. Robinson, Elisha B. Sherwood, James Steele, Sereno W. Streeter, James A. Thome, Samuel H. Thompson, George Whipple and Hiram Wilson. In addition, Benjamin Foltz, Theodore J. Keep, and William Smith, who had been at Cumminsville but were never regularly enrolled in Lane Seminary, also came to Oberlin. Of the total of thirty-two Lane Rebels enrolled at some time at Oberlin eleven were Oneidas. For sources on the Rebels see Chapter VI, note 44, above.

[16] U. T. Chamberlain to S. F. Dickinson, Aug. 8, 1836 (Lane MSS), and *Faith and Works; or, the Life of Edward Weed,* 42–66. Edward Weed persuaded his brother (Thomas A.) to come to Oberlin to study and Phebe Mathews Weed influenced

also, as we shall see, spent some time in Oberlin, though never a member of the institution. Many young men came direct from the Oneida Institute to Oberlin. Of course, they could not be expected to go to Lane Seminary any more. Of the ninety listed in the secondary department at Oneida in 1834 twenty later studied at Oberlin and only two of them were Rebels who came by way of Cincinnati.[17]

Oberlin was about the only college left for young radicals to attend. Throughout the country the conservative interests had suppressed or disciplined anti-slavery organizations and abolitionist teachers and students in the academies and colleges. We have already noted the purge at Western Reserve College. In 1835 some fifty students left Phillips-Andover Academy because they were not allowed to form an anti-slavery society.[18] At Amherst President Humphrey required the abolitionist society to disband.[19] At Hamilton the students' anti-slavery society was dissolved at the "official request of the Faculty."[20] Students at Hanover College, Indiana, announced that they had organized an anti-slavery society but: "At the request of the Faculty . . . we state that the Society was formed contrary to their *advice* . . . that while they disapprove these proceedings they do not think proper to prohibit them."[21] Some students left Marietta College because of the temporizing attitude of the administration there on the slavery question.[22] Rev. Asa Drury, the most active abolitionist at Granville College (Granville, Ohio, now Denison University), was dismissed. He believed that it was because of his views on slavery and advised the radicals among the students to go elsewhere.[23] The abolitionist, John W. Nevin, of the faculty of the Western Theological Seminary, had planned to address

her sister (Lydia) to do the same. These two also were married.—*In Memoriam—Rev. Thomas A. Weed* (1882?).

[17]Oneida Institute, *Sketch of the Conditions and Prospects of the —* (Utica–1834).

[18]*Vermont Chronicle,* Aug. 20, 1835, and Sherlock Bristol, *The Pioneer Preacher* (Chicago—1848), 40–55. One of these students was Richard S. Rust, later distinguished Methodist friend of the Negro.—See the sketch in the *D. A. B.*

[19]W. S. Tyler, *History of Amherst College* (Springfield—1873), 246–251.

[20]*Emancipator,* Dec. 16, 1834.

[21]*Ibid,* May 19, 1836.

[22]J. W. Davis to Weld, Feb. 22, 1836, in Barnes and Dumond, *Op. Cit.,* I, 266–267, and C. S. Renshaw to A. A. Phelps, Apr. 18, 1837, *Emancipator,* May 11, 1837.

[23]G. G. Wenzlaff, *Danforth Goes to College* (Mitchell, S. Dak.—c. 1929), 72–74, Dr. Francis W. Shepardson, however, criticized this interpretation of the dismissal in the *Granville Times,* Sept. 10, 1936.

the Pittsburgh Anti-Slavery Society in June, 1835. He withdrew at the last minute because—"it is apprehended that very serious injury would result to the Seminary with which I am connected."[24] Karl Follen of Harvard College helped to draw up the "Address" at the convention of the New England Anti-Slavery Society in 1834. As a result he was informed in the following year that his services would no longer be needed.[25] President Robert Hamilton Bishop of Miami University, though supporting the action of the trustees at Lane, was friendly to the student anti-slavery society in his own institution. The Miami trustees, therefore, forced his resignation and put a reactionary in his place.[26] The attack on the Oneida Institute in the New York legislature was of a piece with this trend.

It was to be expected that young Yankee reformers would be attracted from everywhere to the college where academic freedom was guaranteed. The most notable group, besides those from Lane Seminary and from the Oneida Institute, came from Western Reserve College. At least six students transferred from Hudson to Oberlin: Samuel Adair, Kansas missionary; George Allen, teacher of music in Oberlin for many years; Timothy Hudson, anti-slavery lecturer and professor in Oberlin; Calvin Steele; Michael Strieby, financial agent in later years, and Horace Taylor, who was to hold many positions of responsibility at Oberlin —and betray them. Hudson was the grandson of the founder of the town of that name and the son of the active abolitionist of Chester X Roads, Dr. W. N. Hudson. Taylor was probably the leading abolitionist among the students at Western Reserve College. As early as May, 1834, he delivered a "very able address" to the Tallmadge Anti-Slavery Society "in which he presented 'eternal truth' in a favorable and convincing manner."[27] Sherlock Bristol was expelled from Phillips-Andover for abolitionist activities and came to Oberlin in the spring of 1835. Danforth B.

[24]*Emancipator,* June 16, 1835.

[25]Sketch of Karl Follen by Kuno Francke in the *Dictionary of American Biography.* Samuel E. Morison (*Three Centuries of Harvard,* 254) believes that other factors were involved besides Follen's abolitionism.

[26]James H. Rodabaugh, "Miami University, Calvinism, and the Anti-Slavery Movement," *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly,* XLVIII, 66–73 (Jan. 1939).

[27]*Emancipator,* July 15, 1834, and *Professor T. B. Hudson, the Casualty, Biographical Sketch, the Funeral, the Coroner's Inquest,* etc. (Pamphlet). On the admission of Steele see Faculty Minutes, May 10, 1837.

Nichols left Granville College for Oberlin in the same year on the advice of Professor Drury.[28] David Stuart, son of Robert Stuart the fur-trader, apparently transferred from Amherst to Oberlin under similar circumstances.[29] George W. Bancroft and several other students came to Oberlin from Marietta in the fall of 1836.[30]

The rush of students, attracted by the publicity secured through the events of the preceding winter, began early in the spring before the arrival of the faculty. On April 2 a college freshman wrote to a friend: "Almost every house is full within half a mile of the Institute, and students are continually flocking in. . . ."[31] Nearly 300 students were connected with the school at some time or other in 1835 and considerably more than that number in the following year. It was a great problem what to do with them and undoubtedly all suffered privation in those first years. Hiram Wilson, one of the Rebels who left Lane "for conscience sake," later wrote that he found Oberlin in the spring of 1835 "obscure and difficult of access" over roads that were "desperately bad." The President and his family lived in a log cabin (the same built by Pease in 1833) and the whole "warm hearted Christian community" were "subject to great inconveniences and much self denial."[32]

The "Barracks," later called "Cincinnati Hall," was erected especially for the temporary use of the Rebels until other more desirable buildings could be provided. It was a long, narrow (20 feet by 144 feet), one-story building containing twenty-four rooms for two students each. It was made of freshly-cut beech lumber and sided on the outside with beech slabs with the bark on—hence its common name—"Slab Hall."[33]

[28]Bristol, *Op. Cit.*, 40–55, and Wenzlaff, *Op. Cit.*

[29]Davis Prudden to Peter Prudden, Oct. 7, 1836 (Prudden MSS); MS Petition for the founding of the Oberlin Musical Association signed by George N. Allen, David Stuart and others (O. C. Lib.), and Phillip A. Rollins, *The Discovery of the Oregon Trail* (New York—1939).

[30]Bancroft to Burnell, June 10, 1836 (Treas. Off., File A), and C. S. Renshaw to Phelps, Apr. 18, 1837, *Loc. Cit.*

[31]James H. and E. Henry Fairchild to Joseph B. Clark, Apr. 2, 1835. The original is in the possession of Miss Edith M. Clark, Oberlin.

[32]Hiram Wilson to Hamilton Hill, Dec. 13, 1852 (Treas. Off., File Q).

[33]The Agent's report dated July 5, 1836, and now in the Miscellaneous Archives states: "Cincinnatti Hall was built & occupyed in June 1835 — Size 20 by 144 — 1 story — 24 Rooms for 2 students each —[$]450." Fairchild, *Op. Cit.*, 67. A pen drawing made later from Fairchild's description is reproduced on the opposite page.

CINCINNATI OR "SLAB" HALL

Built for the Lane Rebels in 1835 and occupied by them during the following year.

(Reproduced from the original pen drawing made from President Fairchild's description by Professor Churchill. The drawing, owned by Marie Rogers Vail, O.C., 1916, is now on deposit in the Oberlin College Library.)

PRESIDENT MAHAN'S HOUSE

Built by the Institute for him in 1835. Occupied by him to 1850 and by Professor Morgan from then until 1881, and by the Conservatory of Music from 1881 to 1883 when it was demolished. It was on the site of the present Warner Hall.

(The photograph is in the College Library.)

The first boarding house, constructed in 1833, officially denominated "Oberlin Hall" in 1837, was, of course, in use. A new boarding house was started in 1834, finished in 1835 and named "Ladies' Hall" in 1836.[34] It was the largest building for the reception of students available at this time. Another building, containing a chapel, recitation rooms and dormitory facilities, was authorized by the trustees in May and called "Colonial Hall" because part of the cost of building was subscribed by colonists and because the main room in it was used by the church as well as for chapel services. It was completed the following year.[35] A house for Professor Finney was erected on the site of the present Chapel which bears his name and a house for President Mahan on the present site of Warner Hall.[36] These houses seem to have been generally attractive and comfortable homes, too luxurious in the eyes of some colonists who remembered the "Oberlin Covenant."[37]

The most important new building was that erected with the funds provided by Tappan, primarily as a dormitory for the theological students. It was called Tappan Hall and was a four-story brick building surmounted by a cupola. It was occupied by students in 1836.[38] John Jay Shipherd's brother, Fayette, was at this time preaching in Walton, N. Y. He persuaded a number of his parishioners to join together and form an association for the building of a dormitory at Oberlin especially for Walton boys.[39] A site was furnished by the trustees for this purpose on the west side of what is now Main Street. Walton Hall came the nearest to a fraternity house of any dormitory erected in the early days of Oberlin.

The rush of students was so great that some buildings were occupied before completion. For two years the chimneys on Ladies' Hall were not completed, but just peered out of the roof, creating a considerable fire hazard. The cupola of Tappan Hall

[34]For the naming of these buildings see T. M., Mar. 10, 1836, and Sept. 7, 1837.

[35]T. M., May 29, 1835; "Bills receivable given for the erection of the Colonial Hall," and "Specifications for Tappan Hall and Colonial Hall," June 15, 1835 (Misc. Archives).

[36]The frontispiece of volume I gives an excellent idea of the location of these buildings.

[37]T. S. Ingersoll to the Trustees, Mar. 9, 1836 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

[38]T. M., May 29, 1835, and "Specifications for Tappan Hall and Colonial Hall," June 15, 1835. (Misc. Archives).

[39]Fayette Shipherd, Mar. 15, 1836, in *New York Evangelist,* Apr. 2, 1836, and T. M., Feb. 11, 1836.

was still unfinished in 1837.[40] Theodore Weld gave his anti-slavery lectures in the fall of 1835 in the bare and drafty assembly room of the still skeletal Ladies' Hall. One girl, Sarah Capen, was seriously injured when "attempting to ascend a flight of stairs in the Boarding house [Ladies' Hall] where a beam was left in such a position as to endanger life."[41]

A student letter gives a picture of the situation at the end of the year: "We have been subjected to a good many inconveniences from the great influx of students, the want of sufficient accomodations, (there being three or four in a room,) and the unsettled state of things around us. But all these we have willingly submitted to, for the present, in prospect of better times, and from a desire to promote the interests of the institution. I am glad to say, that a spirit of mutual accomodation has existed, which has greatly contributed to our comfort and happiness. In truth our attention has been so much engrossed with affairs of higher interest that we have hardly had time to think of the circumstances around us.

"Things are rapidly improving here. Tappan Hall is nearly raised to the 4th story, and will be completed, I suppose, in the spring. It is a noble building, and will accomodate a great number of students. Colonial Hall is almost ready for students, and will accomodate fifty, besides containing a large chapel. The colonists are fast raising for themselves substantial houses, and this place is assuming the appearance of a settled village."[42]

In early August, 1835, William Green, Jr., and Mrs. Green visited Oberlin to see the wonder with their own eyes. Green reported back to the Professorship Association in September.[43] George W. Gale stopped over in October on his way west to found Knox College in Illinois. He was most favorably struck by the physical progress made in two years and by the thoroughly Christian atmosphere.[44]

In February, 1836, the public was officially warned that

[40]N. P. Fletcher, Critical Letters, No. 7 (Misc. Archives).

[41]P. P. Stewart to William Dawes, Feb. 13, 1839 (Treas. Off., File I).

[42]A letter from a young man "who had traveled from New England to connect himself with the first theological class in Oberlin," quoted anonymously in the *New York Evangelist*, Jan. 16, 1836.

[43]Green to Finney, July 26, Aug. 15, 20, 28, 1835 (Finney MSS), MS Report of the Professorship Association, Oct. 9, 1835 (Misc. Archives).

[44]E. E. Calkins, *They Broke the Prairie* (New York—1937), 60, and Gale to Finney, Oct. 22, 1835 (Finney MSS).

additional students could not, at that time, be cared for. The trustees felt "constrained" "to caution all applicants for admission against incurring the expense of a journey to Oberlin before hearing definitely from us."[45] Shipherd gloried in Oberlin's mounting popularity. A glowing account which appeared in the *New York Evangelist* a little later must have been inspired by him. "The College University of Oberlin, in northern Ohio . . .," it runs, "has outstripped all the present enterprises of the age. It has 800 acres of the most beautiful land, surrounding the college, belonging to it. It has eight endowed professorships. Its buildings are spacious and elegant, though yet not complete. Two hundred and fifty students during the last year, were obliged to occupy unfinished rooms, and near one hundred others who applied for admission, were denied for want of room."[46]

The surplus of students became so great that the trustees at their meeting in March of 1836 determined to establish branch schools for the training of preparatory students who would be received at Oberlin when ready for college. It was recommended "to Bro. Jabez L. Burrell to take measures for establishing a branch manual Labor School on his farm and that this Board will sustain him with its counsel and influence"; this school at Sheffield became the most important of the branch schools. In June forty students were enrolled at the "Sheffield Manual Labor Institute" including the one Negro—James Bradley. Eighteen or twenty or more students were sent to the Elyria High School. A somewhat larger number (at least 24) were assigned to the Grand River Institute at Austinburg, a school headed by a prominent abolitionist, O. K. Hawley. Two or three went to Farmington Academy and something over a dozen to the branch at Abbeyville where Amos Dresser became a teacher. Necessary expense of removal, such as the transportation of baggage, was paid for students transported to Austinburg. The trustees even issued a public announcement that they would "aid (funds excepted) in the establishment of branch institutions elsewhere," and "refer applicants at Oberlin to them; and receive them when fitted for College in preference to others; provided the Oberlin course of study, preparatory to college is pursued; and the institution is founded upon the grand physical and moral principles

[45]Levi Burnell, Oberlin, Feb. 16, 1836, in the *Ohio Observer,* Feb. 25, 1836.
[46]*New York Evangelist,* Apr. 2, 1836.

of the Oberlin Institute." Readers were assured that, "An institution thus founded can be at once filled with students from Oberlin Collegiate Institute, as was the Grand River Institute at Austinburg."[47] This system of branch institutions was only temporary. The Sheffield school was abandoned in August of 1837; apparently this marked the end of the practice.

On September 14, 1836, the first regular Commencement was held when fifteen young men, including several Lane Rebels, were graduated from the Theological Course. Well over two thousand people were present in the tent to hear the orations by the graduates and the inaugural addresses of three professors: James Dascomb, Henry Cowles and J. P. Cowles. About a hundred and twenty new students were received, nearly half joining the College and Theological departments.[48] John Keep wrote a month later to Gerrit Smith: "15 theological students 'graduated' at the Commencement on 14 Sept. & young men who, I have no doubt will be *known* in the Churches & in the Country, by their *successful* well doing. Commencement day was rainy but the *'big tent'* was well supplied with auditors, & good judges—men who have been at Literary Institutions, were *full* of the expression of their approval—Surely it is out of place to speak of Oberlin, as many do, as the 'school of dunces.' . . . With the exception that we have *no money*, the whole concern is in a state of *marked prosperity*. Nearly 150 have *this* fall entered the College & Theological departments, between 20 & 30 theological—& now about 400 are in a course of study in our connexion. During the summer, the recitations, lectures, & manual labor &c &c have all gone on with *system* & energy & great promise—scholars industrious in the main—embodying an unusual *proportion* of native talent—selfdenying & heavenly in their aims."[49]

They were boom times—"with the exception that we have *no money*."

[47]T. M., Mar. 10, 1836; F. M., Apr. 20, May 4, and May 11, 1836; P. C. M., Mar. 1, 1836; "Sheffield Manual Labor Institute—Catalogue, June, 1836" (Misc. Archives), F. Hamlin to R. E. Gillett, Apr. 23, 1836 (Treas. Off., File D); Report of Agent Gillett for 1836; Amos Dresser to Levi Burnell, June 16, 1836; "Austinburg Catalogue, June 1836" (Misc. Archives); Asa Smith to Shipherd, Jan. 19, 1834 (Treas. Off., File I); Dresser to Burnell, Oct. 17, 1836 (File B); D. Branch to Burnell, Mar. 31, 1837 (File A); *Ohio Observer,* Apr. 7, 1836, and O. K. Hawley to Burnell, Mar. 7, 1836 (Misc. Archives). Hawley was president of the Ashtabula County Anti-Slavery Society in 1840.—*Philanthropist,* May 26, 1840.

[48]*Ohio Observer,* Sept. 29, 1836.

[49]John Keep to Gerrit Smith, Oct. 14, 1836 (Gerrit Smith MSS).

## CHAPTER XVI

# *NEW LEADERS FOR OLD*

WHEREVER Finney went he drew the spotlight of public interest. Now that spotlight turned on Oberlin. The many Finney converts and followers throughout the North now gave their moral and sometimes financial support to Oberlin, and Finney's detractors became the detractors of Oberlin. The coming of Finney to Oberlin was of supreme importance. One can no more think of Oberlin without Finney than of Harvard without Eliot, Williams without Mark Hopkins or Yale without Dwight. It should be remembered that, though he was interested in anti-slavery and other reforms, favored the admission of Negroes to Oberlin and excluded slaveholders from Communion in New York,[1] the spread of the Gospel was his supreme purpose. His chief hope in connection with Oberlin was that here an army of inspired evangelists might be trained who would lead the van in the battle for the Lord in the Valley of Moral Death.[2] In his major purpose Finney was more exactly in accord with Shipherd than with Weld. Shipherd as a Finneyite had built Oberlin according to a pattern acceptable to his master; the coming of the great evangelist was not really a revolution but a perfect consummation of the first plans of the Founder.

Though Asa Mahan became President of the Oberlin Institute his influence and reputation in Oberlin and in the outside world never equalled that of Finney, but he was one of the greatest of the followers.[3] Shipherd recommended him to the trus-

[1] *Ohio Observer,* Nov. 27, 1834. Also see below pages 251–253 on Finney and anti-slavery.

[2] On Shipherd's opinion of Finney see Shipherd to the Trustees, Jan. 19, 1835. The leaders of Western Reserve College, recognizing the tremendous prestige of Finney, attempted desperately to persuade him to go to Hudson instead. President George E. Pierce wrote Finney from Hudson on April 10, 1835, formally offering him a professorship in that institution. The original is in the Finney MSS.

[3] Biographical data is in the Mahan MSS in possession of Mrs. E. N. Gage of Winter Park, Florida; *Andover Seminary General Catalogue, 1880,* page 82;

tees as a "critical scholar in the different sciences, but especially in intellectual & moral philosophy," having, "according to Mr. Finney, the best mind in Western New York while he was there laboring." To Oberlin in 1835 Mahan brought a great store of enthusiasm, of energy, of devotion and optimism. On March 12, 1835, he wrote to Nathan Fletcher from New York: "As soon as possible after my arrival in Cincinnati I intend to start for Oberlin. . . . I hope that we shall be able to say to all our pupils, be ye 'followers of us as we are of Christ.' Brother Finney is a man of God full of [the] holy Ghost and of faith. His like cannot be found in any other institution in the country. His co-adjutators [*sic*] will be men of kindred spirits. Will not the Lord of hosts be with us & the God of Jacob be our refuge? He will. Oberlin shall yet become a great luminary in the kingdom of Christ, whose light shall encircle the whole earth."[4]

John Morgan also consented to accept a post at Oberlin when he was assured that the trustees had taken the right stand on the slavery question and that Finney and Mahan would be there. His liberalism lost him his job at Lane Seminary but opened the way to Oberlin. Erudite, versatile, good-natured, not overly ambitious, Morgan was one of Oberlin's outstanding leaders and "characters" for over a generation. One of his pupils in Lane and Oberlin has left a few contemporary word-pictures of him: "As rough & as noble as ever," "the same tear-eyed, melting-hearted, but aligator-hided John." When this young man, James Thome, became Professor of Rhetoric, Weld suggested that Morgan might give him some help. Thome wrote to Weld of his interview: "I told him when I reached O. that you had consigned me to him as the proper man to qualify me for my professorship. He rolled his huge outer man from side to side, like a dutch scupper careening at its moorings, haw-hawed & exclaimed 'What a confounded numscull that Weld is.' "[5]

*Oberlin Review,* XVI, 216–217 (Apr. 30, 1889); A. D. Eddy to Finney, Jan. 31, 1831 (Finney MSS); Sketch in *D. A. B.;* Mahan's *Autobiography, Intellectual, Moral, and Spiritual* (London—1882).

[4]Shipherd to Keep, Dec. 13, 1834, and Mahan to Fletcher, Mar. 12, 1835 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS). Mahan's formal acceptance, like Finney's dated June 30, 1835, is in the Treasurer's Office, File F. Mahan's formal resignation from the Lane Board of Trustees is dated Apr. 25, 1836 (Lane MSS).

[5]James A. Thome to Theodore Weld, Jan. 10, 1841, and May 18, 1839 (Weld MSS). The former is not printed in Barnes and Dumond, *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld,* but the latter is found in volume II, pages 763–766. Morgan's formal

Another appointment of major importance was that of the Rev. Henry Cowles, of Austinburg, to be Professor of Languages. Cowles had been associated with Shipherd in various capacities. They had both been active members and officers of the Western Reserve Anti-Slavery Society. In October, 1832, they spoke on the same program at a meeting of the Western Reserve Branch of the American Education Society at Detroit.[6] Cowles was a thorough scholar and a prime factor in the intellectual and spiritual life of Oberlin from 1835 through the Civil War. When his acceptance was officially announced, the *Ohio Observer*, organ of Western Reserve College and usually hypercritical of Oberlin and all associated with it, spoke of him in the highest terms of praise: "We are not *in the habit* of speaking in flattering terms of public men; but everybody knows that Mr. Cowles is a lovely man. . . . As a minister of the gospel, his labors are highly appreciated by the churches, and have been blessed by God to the salvation of many souls. As it is, Mr. Cowles will be an acquisition to Oberlin; and we are glad that the Trustees have chosen a man whose feelings and views are identical with those of the Christian public on the Reserve."[7]

Cowles had at first opposed the establishment of another theological department in northern Ohio, fearing the results of a clash between Hudson and Oberlin.[8] But he changed his mind and in the autumn drove alone in a wagon to Oberlin, sending back a letter to his wife shortly after his arrival describing the hardships of the journey and giving his first impressions of the place.[9] The journey required three days; the first day "by diligence and patience" he reached Chagrin, the second, Dover; and he arrived in Oberlin, catching up with a farmer whom he had sent ahead driving the family cow, on the third day. From Elyria he found the going execrable: ". . . You will be apt to think that you will certainly turn over; but I find that a large waggon at least does not turn over very easily." He advised his wife when she followed him to take a saddle "and when you come to the

acceptance of the professorship at Oberlin is in the Treasurer's Office, File F. Shipherd quotes the Lane Rebels' praises of Morgan in his letter to Keep of Dec. 15, 1834 (Q. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

[6]American Education Society, *Quarterly Register*, V, 264 (Feb., 1833).

[7]T. M., Sept. 21, 1835, and the *Ohio Observer*, Oct. 1, 1835.

[8]Henry Cowles to Shipherd, May 13, 1835 (Treas. Off., File B).

[9]Henry Cowles to Alice Welch Cowles [n. d.] (Cowles-Little MSS).

terrible & horrible, & feel unable to walk any farther, then unharness, put on the saddle & ride into Oberlin." "I attended prayers today at 4 o'clock," he continued, "was publicly introduced to the students somewhat to my embarrassment, and then attended a meeting of the Faculty for the first time. What a rush of responsibilities comes over me! What an entrance upon new & untried scenes! O how I need strength equal to my day!—I expect now to take charge of two classes in Greek, the History & perhaps soon another in Euclid. Thus the work begins." His wife, Alice Welch Cowles, followed him soon, despite the uninviting description which her husband gave her of the journey. Except in shortness of years, her contribution to Oberlin equalled that made by the professor. As Principal of the Female Department and leader in the moral reform movement she took second place to no other Oberlin woman of her day. Oberlin was beginning to appear: Finney, Mahan, Morgan—and now the Cowles family.

John P. Cowles and E. P. Barrows, one a brother of and both classmates of Henry Cowles at Yale, were also elected to positions in the faculty.[10] The former occupied the post of Professor of Literature of the Old Testament and of the History of the Jewish Church from 1836 to 1839, when an unfortunate controversy led to his resignation. Barrows refused the appointment, but, over a generation later, finally accepted a similar offer and taught in Oberlin from 1871 to 1880. A fourth Yale man was appointed Professor of Sacred Music. Elihu Parsons Ingersoll was another Finney man, a native of Massachusetts and graduate of Yale in the class of 1832. He held his position for one year only, though he lived in the community somewhat longer.[11] The distinguished abolitionist, James G. Birney, was elected "professor of Law, Oratory & Belles Lettres" but never came. Jonathan Blanchard, also an abolitionist and later successively president of Knox and Wheaton colleges, applied for a position, but was not appointed.[12] In the summer of 1836 James

[10]T. M., Feb. 10, 1836, and May 29, 1835. On July 11, 1835, Joshua Leavitt of the *New York Evangelist* wrote to Shipherd recommending their appointments (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

[11]E. P. Barrows to Shipherd, July 11, 1835 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS); Edward E. Salisbury, *Biographical Memoranda Respecting All Who Ever Were Members of the Class of 1832 in Yale College* (New Haven—1880), 165, and Ingersoll to Shipherd, Aug. 15, Oct. 12, 1835 (Treas. Off., File D).

[12]T. M., May 29, 1835; Mahan to Birney, Jan. 12, 1835 (Dumond, *Birney Let-*

M. Buchanan, of Danville, Kentucky, who had been forced out of the Centre College faculty for his anti-slavery activities, became Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy on Birney's recommendation. Oberlin was not to his liking and he resigned a few weeks later.[13] At about the same time George Whipple, one of the Lane Rebels, became Principal of the Preparatory Department at a salary of $400.00 a year.[14] Of the original faculty of 1834, James Dascomb and Seth Waldo remained. Both resigned early in 1835, but Dascomb was persuaded to return.[15]

The storm which accompanied the dispute over the admission of colored students was no mean gale. For some time Keep thought of resigning. In March of 1835 he wrote to Shipherd: "I accept your exhortation not to withdraw from the Board at Oberlin, & will reply that I have *concluded* not to do it so long as there is a prospect of doing good by remaining. At our last meeting I told the Board that if the opposition members *persisted* in their complaints, & would not themselves either *with*draw or draw *with* us, that I should retire, & leave them to take their own course &c."[16] The leadership of this able minister had been of great significance in time of crisis and his retention was fortunate for the institution. Two pillars of the early days did drop out, however: Eliphalet Redington and Judge Frederick Hamlin. The work of Redington as trustee and treasurer had been second only in importance to that of Shipherd and Stewart in 1833. Nathan P. Fletcher also left the board in 1836, largely because of personal grievances arising out of the epochal controversy. In the same year Levi Burnell, former head of the defunct Lorain Iron Company of Elyria, became Secretary and Treasurer. Owen Brown, the father of John Brown, was attracted to the Board because of his anti-slavery sentiments. He had recently resigned as a trustee of Western Reserve College

*ters,* I, 168–9); Birney to O. C. I., Feb. 5, 1836, and Blanchard to Shipherd, Feb. 23, 1836 (Misc. Archives).

[13]T. M., May 18, Sept. 13, 1836, and Mahan to Birney, May 17, 1836; Buchanan to Birney, June 27, Aug. 15, 1837 (Dumond, *Birney Letters,* I, 327, 331, 352–354). Buchanan's resignation (Sept. 13, 1836) is in the Misc. Archives.

[14]T. M., Sept. 13, 1836.

[15]*Ibid.,* May 29, 1835. Keep wrote of Waldo: "I told Mr. Waldo that it would be for *his* interest to remain & be still & work on—but that if he must oppose & worry, we would give him a discharge &c &c &c."—J. Keep to J. J. S., Mar. 21, 1835 (Treas. Off., File E).

[16]Keep to Shipherd, Mar. 21, 1835 (Treas. Off., File E).

because of the decline in reform zeal in that institution. Stewart and Shipherd, too, their work on the foundations being done, left the erection of the superstructure to others.

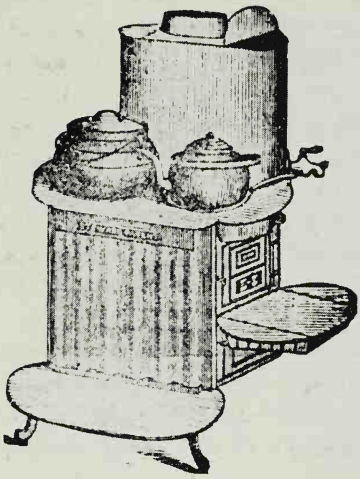
Stewart, as we have seen, had been the outstanding opponent of the admission of Negroes; he had also been chiefly instrumental in forcing the resignation of N. P. Fletcher, next to Keep and Shipherd the outstanding abolitionist among the trustees. Fletcher and his faction bitterly attacked Stewart for his stand on the Negro question, for his insistence on "Christian economy" in diet, etc., and for his alleged mismanagement as steward.[17] Mr. and Mrs. Stewart left Oberlin in sorrow and disappointment in the autumn of 1836, and in 1838 he resigned his position as trustee.

In 1837 and 1838 we find them living in New York City in poverty, Stewart teaching a school for colored people (evidently it was mixed education to which he objected). In September of 1838, Stewart took out his second stove patent, an improvement on the "Oberlin Stove." This first "Stewart" stove was distinguished by a fire-box hanging in the oven, crescent-shaped covers or lids, and a water reservoir which set over the smoke pipe and utilized the heat which otherwise would escape up the chimney. Its chief virtue was the efficient use of fuel. Stewart claimed that it cooked or baked satisfactorily with only three pieces of wood. Japanned tin covers were even provided for the sides to keep the heat in in the summer when it was not desired to warm the room. It was because of this feature that it later came to be known as "P. P. Stewart's Air Tight, Summer and Winter Cooking Stove."[18]

The Stewarts removed to Troy from New York and there lived in straitened circumstances for some time before any considerable amount of money was realized from the invention. N. Starbuck & Son finally agreed to undertake the manufacture of the stove, which they did with considerable success for more than ten years. A paragraph from a letter from Stewart to William Dawes, written in 1846, sounds like an advertisement, but gives some conception of the success which the Connecticut whit-

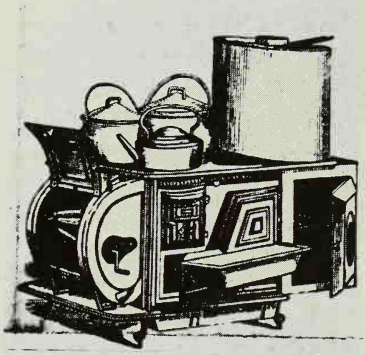
[17]N. P. Fletcher, MS Critical Letters (1837–38) in Misc. Archives. Evidence of Stewart's dissatisfaction with Oberlin is to be found in Sally Hammond and Amasa Stewart to P. P. Stewart, July 28, 1836 (Treas. Off., File D).

[18]Stewart to Burnell, Apr. 23, and Aug. 20, 1837 (Treas. Off., File I); E. C. Stewart, *Op. Cit.*, 68 *et seq.*; and William J. Keep, The History of the Stove (MS).



Stewart's 1838 Pattern.

Stewart's 1853 Pattern.



Stewart's 1859 Pattern.

STEWART'S COOKING STOVES

No drawing of the "Oberlin Stove" is known to exist, but it probably resembled the 1838 model.

(From William J. Keep, "The History of the Stove," a MS owned by the Business Historical Society, Boston, Mass. Reproduced by permission of the Society.)

tler had finally achieved: "The expectations entertained at an early day, in regard to the ultimate success of the Summer & Winter, airtight, Cooking Stove, have not been disappointed. The number of stoves manufactured and sold during the year ending Jan. 1st, 1845, was 3000. The number manufactured and sold during the last year was 4800. When we consider the high price of the stove ($16: at wholesale, $22: to 24: retail,) all *warranted* and the very small number returned, it is apparent that the families who have them in use, set an unusually high value upon them. Individuals frequently acknowledge themselves under very deep obligations to a kind Providence, for bringing into their possession an article of so much value in the domestic department. Good house-keepers seldom use the stove long without becoming very much attached to it: and the sum of their testimony is, that there is no one of the important branches of labour appertaining to a cooking apparatus that cannot be performed with this stove, in the most perfect manner; with all convenient dispatch; with unusual comfort to the operator, and with an exceedingly small quantity of fuel."[19]

By patents of 1853 and 1859 the stove was enlarged and again improved. The most interesting improvement was the addition of a "tin roaster which he placed upon the apron." On this, meat was hung "and revolved by a spit and roasted by the heat from the front of the firebox." The new stoves were even more popular than the old "Stewarts" had been. They were manufactured by firms in Troy, in Buffalo, and in St. Louis, and many of them were still in use in the memory of living men.[20]

In the period of his financial success Stewart did not forget the good causes to which he had given so much of his earlier years. Indeed, he seems to have given away almost all the profits that he made. Ministers and missionaries could always purchase his stoves for the wholesale price or less. In 1845 he gave $500.00 to the Oberlin Institute and other extensive donations followed. In the same year and in the next we find him contributing materially to Professor Morgan's salary. In 1846 in Oberlin's hour of greatest financial need he came west and appeared before the trustees, suggesting means of dealing with the situation and making another large contribu-

[19]Stewart to William Dawes, Feb. 6, 1846 (Treas. Off., File P).
[20]Keep, *Op. Cit.*

tion. As late as 1862 he and his wife sent a New Year's gift of money to the Oberlin faculty.[21] Stewart was always particularly interested in health reform. In 1860 he returned to Oberlin to lecture on that subject. The *News* reported it:

"On Tuesday evening of last week, Mr. P. P. Stewart, of Troy, N. Y., addressed the students in the Chapel on the subject of health.

"Mr. Stewart is known to the public at large as the inventor of the cooking stove which bears his name; to the friends of Oberlin College as one of its founders, and since resigning his seat in the board of Trustees, as a munificent contributor to its resources.

"But his personal friends know him rather as one whose sympathies are largely enlisted in discussing, originating and applying means for the restoration and maintenance of bodily health. As an inventor, his patent may be his pet, but hygiene is then its twin, and rather the Jacob than the Esau. This was evident to his audience. He could not forget his stove, nor could he wander long from his theme."[22]

One may read between the lines of the story that Stewart was somewhat of a "character," but it is clear that he was sincere, honest, industrious, thrifty and a practical, benevolent Christian. His success in the material world was never attained at the sacrifice of ideals or of religion. He valued his success only in that it gave him greater ability to do good.

Shipherd continued at intervals (notably in 1836 and 1838) to serve in the capacity of financial agent, but it was clearly apparent to him that his work for Oberlin was largely done. He had laid the cornerstone; others must build upon it. As early as October of 1835 he requested the Church to relieve him of his pastorate and, early in the following year, he definitely resigned.[23] Ill health was undoubtedly one of the immediate causes of his resignation. ". . . I have had some paralytic affections" he wrote his brother, "which I thot said to me, 'set thine house in order for thou shalt die & not live.' Poor Esther buried me, & Henry grieved in his orphanage. Eliza too mourned that she was

[21]P. P. S. to Hamilton Hill, Dec. 10, 1844; Feb. 17, 1845; Sept. 1, 1845; to William Dawes, Feb. 6, 1846; to William Dawes and Hamilton Hill, Apr. 10, 1836; and to Hamilton Hill, Jan. 1, 1862 (Treas. Off., File P); Joab Seeley to Hamilton Hill, Dec. 10, 1846 (Treas. Off., File O), and T. M., Aug. 22, 1846.

[22]*Lorain County News* (Oberlin), June 27, 1860.

[23]Oberlin Church, MS Records, 1834–39, Oct. 2, 1835, and June 17, 1836.

fatherless. . . . I really felt that my days were well nigh finished."[24]

Besides, success in Oberlin had germinated in the mind of the "Pioneer of the Valley of Dry Bones" an expanded vision. He would fill the whole region with institutions on the Oberlin plan where, through manual labor combined with study, the young men and women of the West could be trained up for the great work of converting the valley to Christianity. In his official letter of farewell to his congregation he wrote: "The Great head of the church, is Opening before me a Door of Usefullness, wide and effectual in the work of Christian Education, and distinctly calling me into that great and blessed work so that while I can do but little in the plenteous harvests by personal ministry I can do much to supply it with effective Labourers & thus preach Christ still thro the Oberlin Institute *and kindred Seminaries which under God I may aid in building.*"[25] The New York merchants, members of the Oberlin Professorship Association, were to back him in the grand new enterprise by which land speculations were to finance a succession of missionary colleges in the West. Eliza Branch, acting as amanuensis, wrote of the plan to Fayette Shipherd: "The brethren, Dimond, Clark, & Hunt, having pledged $13,000 . . . he will leave Oberlin about 1st June, on an exploring tour. . . . He is to select & purchase the most eligible site for a manual labor institution. The design is to get 10,000 acres & to raise money enough on the sale of it to endow the college, & aid O. some $10,000. In addition to this enough to make a second purchase for a Theological Sem, from which enough must be saved for a *third purchase,* & so on, until through *these,* that great valley shall be supplied with efficient laborers, who will reap down her harvests, already ripe, & gather them unto the garner of the Lord."[26]

Elihu P. Ingersoll, Professor of Church Music and Principal of the Preparatory Department at Oberlin in 1835–36, had a brother, Erastus S. Ingersoll, who had originated a scheme to

[24]J. J. S. to Fayette Shipherd, Jan. 21, 1836 (Shipherd MSS).

[25]Oberlin Church, MS Records, 1834–39, Jan 17, 1836. (Italics are mine.)

[26]Shipherd and Eliza Branch to Fayette Shipherd, May 9, 1836 (Shipherd-Randolph MSS), and Whipple to Shipherd, Apr., 1836, reprinted in F. C. Wilcox "Piety and Profit in College Building," *Journal of Higher Education,* VIII, 147–149 (Mar., 1937). Wilcox's article is suggestive but many of his facts are quite inaccurate.

establish a Christian colony and school *a la Oberlin* in the central part of Michigan. Professor Ingersoll resigned from the Oberlin faculty to aid his brother and easily persuaded Shipherd to sponsor the enterprise. Dr. Isaac Jennings, Oberlin's medical reformer, also participated in the preparation for this manual labor, missionary school near the present Lansing, which was to be called the Grand River Seminary. In June of 1836 Shipherd issued an announcement of the new institution, together with a plea for financial aid. This appeal, written in the wilderness on a bark table "in an Indian wigwam on the banks of the Cedar [River]," is reminiscent of those made in previous years for Oberlin:

"To the Brethren and Sisters of Eastern Churches.

"Beloved in Jesus—I address you from the Great West, on a subject, and under circumstances as interesting as this Valley is extensive. . . .

"Three years ago I was among you on an agency in behalf of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute, (then prospective,) hoping thereby, under God, to do much to supply his 'plenteous harvest,' with effective laborers. Now, I am in the center of Michigan, seeking a location for Oberlin second; not because I, or my Oberlin associates have occasion to forsake Oberlin first; but because 'the place is too strait for us,' and there remaineth beyond us much land to be possessed in the name of the Lord; and because the Oberlin mode of possessing it, is [has?] succeeded by the Lord beyond a parallel. . . .

"Therefore, beloved, I am here, (with a dear member of our faculty, and a hundred brethren of this state,) sent of God, we trust, to find the place where we will continue his precious Oberlin work."[27]

Shipherd was careful to make it clear that he was by no means withdrawing his support from Oberlin Institute. "As my Oberlin brethren concurred with me in the belief that I could be more useful as a pioneer in planting other colonies and institutions, and I have necessarily left the institution for this work, while it is yet immature greatly needing funds, let me commend to your Christian beneficence my worthy and beloved successor in its agency, John Keep. . . ."

[27]J. J. S., June 5, 1836, in the *New York Evangelist,* Sept. 16, 1836.

President Jackson's famous "Specie Circular" requiring payment in gold for Government lands spoiled many a promising land speculation scheme, but few as unselfish as this one. Shipherd wrote to his brother: "Genl Jackson's *'Golden Order'* about specie payment for land cramps me in my new enterprise—cramps Oberlin & nearly all in business."[28] After the financial collapse of 1837 his New York backers were unable to pay their subscriptions. In May, 1839, failure was acknowledged in a circular sent to all subscribers and signed by E. P. Ingersoll, Jennings and Shipherd.[29] In the meantime Shipherd had been promoting a similar enterprise in Indiana.

In March,1837, the founding of another unit in the system of pious mission colleges was announced. This was the Lagrange Collegiate Institute, of which Shipherd wrote to the editor of the *New York Evangelist*: "I am happy to inform those who pray the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into it, that another Oberlin, . . . is rising in Lagrange county, Indiana." He continued: "The hope of our republic, of our American Zion, and of the world, degraded in ignorance and sin, is *Christian education.*" The grand design appears in a later sentence: "Literary institutions must rise as the forests fall; and the seeds of Christian science must be scattered upon the fallow ground of prairies and plains as they are broken up. Enlightened minds clearly see that much delay will be irretrievable ruin." The Lagrange Institute was to follow closely the Oberlin pattern. "To meet the demands of physiological law, and the indigence of promising youth," manual labor was to be required. It was to partake, too, of Oberlin's reform character: "This institution will allow free discussion, and openly sustain the great moral enterprises of the day—such as revivals, temperance in all things, the strict observance of the Sabbath, moral reform, Christian union, human rights, under whatever color or circumstances, &c." Shipherd expected that it would receive its students partly from the overflow from Oberlin.[30] Nothing more is known of this project, but it is suspected that it, too, died of financial malnutrition.

He was again engaged in raising funds for Oberlin in 1838,

[28]J. J. S. to Fayette Shipherd, Aug. 4, 1836 (Shipherd-Randolph MSS).

[29]Wolcott B. Williams, "Two Early Efforts to Found Colleges in Michigan, at Delta and at Marshall" in the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society, *Historical Collections,* XXX (Lansing—1906), 524 *et seq.*

[30]*New York Evangelist,* Apr. 22, 1837.

but his health was much impaired by the constant travelling and (as he believed) the impossibility of obtaining Graham diet. When, therefore, he received a call to the First Free Church in Newark, New Jersey, he accepted.[31] His term in that pastorate was not long, however, for a controversy over the question of the seating of Negroes arose when Mrs. Shipherd took her Negro maidservant with her to church and brought her, with the rest of the family, into the pastor's pew.[32] In the autumn Shipherd was again seeking subscriptions for the Oberlin Institute.

In 1842–43 Shipherd preached in Buffalo[33] and in Strongsville, Ohio, but in the latter year he turned again to Michigan. In November of 1843 he went to that state to take care of Oberlin's interests in certain lands and to make a preliminary survey for a new colony and school.[34] In February of the following year he led the first colonists to Olivet, another new Oberlin. Two months later he wrote to Amasa Walker, thanking him for a gift: "And I thank the Lord that he is thus & otherwise aiding us to do his good work at Olivet. Our progress is slow but I trust safe. Our prospect of usefulness appears to me to be fair."[35] His weak body was breaking. Though, he wrote to Hamilton Hill, he was "happy in confidence that we are doing God's work," he recognized that he was "weary & worn and greatly pressed with labors." He died at Olivet September 16, 1844.[36]

The last letter written by the Founder to his friends and associates in Oberlin contains a restatement of the principles of the Oberlin Institute as he understood them:

"Allow me also to express my humble & earnest prayer that they [the trustees], with the beloved Faculty, Sec.; & all in the different departments, may do the work after the *Christian* model—especially, that the departments of Biblical Instruction, & Physiology, including Manual Labor may receive the attention due to their great importance. If these departments wane, the life current will

[31] J. J. S. to Levi Burnell, Mar. 25, 1838 (Treas. Off., File H). See also Shipherd's statement in the *New York Evangelist,* Apr. 28, 1838.

[32] [Esther R. Shipherd], A Sketch of the Life and Labors of John J. Shipherd (MS).

[33] *Ibid.,* and J. J. S. to [?], Apr. 6, 1842 (Treas. Off., File H).

[34] J. J. S. to Hamilton Hill, Nov. 17, 1843 (Treas. Off., File H).

[35] J. J. S. to H. H., Mar. 28, 1844 (Treas. Off., File O); W. B. Williams, *History of Olivet College* (Olivet—1901), 7–16, and Olivet College, *Catalogue,* 1846.

[36] J. J. S. to H. Hill, Apr. 22, 1844 (Treas. Off., File O), and Mahan to Hill, Sept. 21, 1844 (File F). The date of his death given on his gravestone at Olivet is September *10.*

SHIPHERD'S GRAVE AT OLIVET

(Photograph by the author)

"We well remember with what humble zeal
Thou didst go forth as champion in the cause
Of holiness and truth; enlisting hearts
To enter in the field and choose a spot
From whence might emanate the blessed light
That cheered thy pathway. And the work was done.
An institution favored much of God
Rose from those efforts, and 'twas thine to see
The gospel standard reared, and holiness
Like the bright sun, pouring most vivid rays
Distant and wide. . . ."

A. C. J. in the *Oberlin Evangelist*, Oct. 9, 1844

flow out, & the *heart* of Oberlin die. The greatness of Oberlin is doubtless attributable under God to her adherence to the noble principle, that *public Institutions no less than private christians must do right however contrary to popular sentiment.* That the managers of Oberlin Institute may never swerve from this grand principle is one of the strongest desires of my soul. To each I would say with emphasis 'Be not conformed to this world.' "[37]

So the "Pioneer" passed, leaving the task of continuing the great work at Oberlin to Mahan, Morgan, Cowles, Keep, and Finney.

[37]J. J. S. to H. Hill, Aug. 17, 1844 (Treas. Off., File O).

## *Book Two*

# Oberlinism

"Our Institute & colony are peculiar in that which is good . . ."

J. J. SHIPHERD, April 14, 1834.

"Oberlin must be the burning and the shining light which shall lead on to the Millennium."

JOHN KEEP TO LYDIA KEEP, London, November 5–13, 1839 (Keep MSS).

"The institution [Oberlin] has always sought, and still seeks, by the blessing of God, the promotion of earnest and living piety among the students. This has ever been a primary aim with the Faculty. They never deem their work done with their pupils till they see them following the Great Teacher."

T. B. H[UDSON] in the *Independent* (New York), January 22, 1857.

## CHAPTER XVII

# *GOD'S COLLEGE*

IN THE first half of the nineteenth century militant Protestant Christianity saw itself marching to the conquest of America and the World. Rank on rank they advanced with flying banners: the revivalists leading the way, the missionary societies, the Bible societies, the Sabbath reformers, the religious education and Sabbath School societies, and the tract societies. Combined in the same great army and under the same staff were the anti-slavery societies, the peace societies, the Seamen's Friend Society, the temperance societies, the physiological reform and moral reform societies. Closely allied were the educational reformers whose task it was to train a generation for Utopia. In the heavens they saw the reflection of the glorious dawn, which was just beyond the horizon, when all men should know Christ, should serve him in body and in spirit, and acknowledge their universal brotherhood.

The movement was to some extent international. In England the Methodists, Quakers, the Evangelicals (the latter at the height of their power in 1833) established Bible societies and fought for the abolition of slavery in the British dependencies, for temperance, for Sabbath observance, for morality, for sobriety and thrift. In France the *Société de la Morale Chretienne* was founded in 1821 under the presidency of the Duc de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, *"patron banal de toutes les philanthropies de la terre."* This society opposed Negro slavery and worked for better physical hygiene, for the suppression of gaming houses and lotteries and for the improvement of the morals of the younger generation. The society was in correspondence with the peace and Bible societies in England and the United States and with the Colonization Society in the United States. Among its members were the statesman Guizot, Victor de Broglie, the Duc de Choiseul, Lafayette, De Tocqueville and Father Jean Frederic Oberlin, himself.

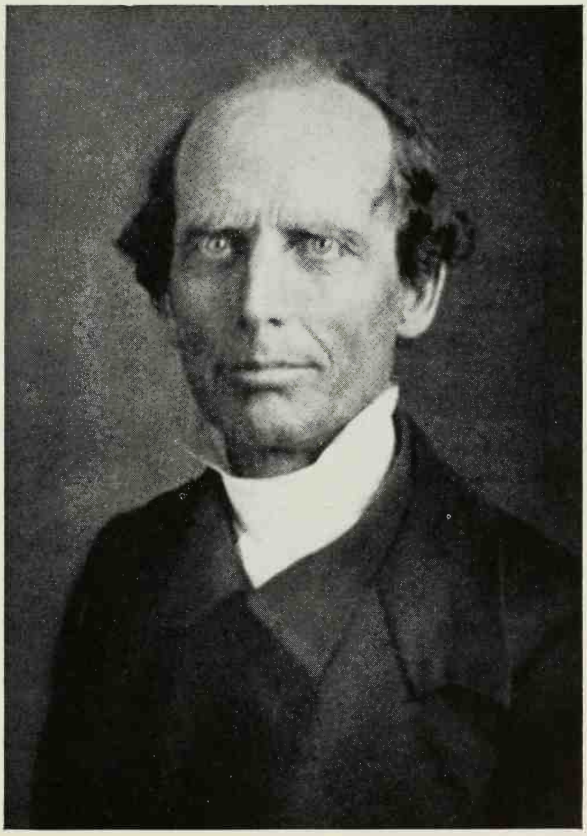
But it was in America that there was the greatest hope for success. In America all things were being made new. In America where all was progress, development, movement and hope, in America the Millennium seemed about to begin, to be completely achieved by one last tremendous effort by the organized hosts of Christian reform.[1]

One great and devoted brigade gathered about the standard of Oberlin, captained by Finney, Shipherd, Mahan and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Cowles, aided by a hundred able lieutenants. Nowhere else was the vision quite so clearly seen; nowhere else was consecration to the great Cause quite so complete and fervent. And from the Oberlin center went out an influence whose power is beyond estimation, through the thousands of young men and women educated in the Institute, through publications like the *Oberlin Quarterly* and the *Oberlin Evangelist,* and through the preaching of Mahan and of Finney. Much has been written on the work of individual men in the reform movement, but the Oberlin unit (which was larger than Finney—perhaps larger than the sum of the human elements which made it up) has been underestimated, by some even overlooked. In Oberlin the story of Christian reform is complete; Oberlin was the embodiment of the movement.

It should never be forgotten that Oberlin was first and foremost a religious school. "You are not only educated," Finney reminded the graduating class in his commencement address of 1851, "but educated in *God's College*—a College reared under God, and for God, by the faith, the prayers, the toils and the sacrifices of God's people. You cannot but know that it has been the sole purpose of the founders and patrons of this College to educate here men and women *for God and for God's cause.*"[2] Had Shipherd been alive and present how gladly he would have added his Amen! Had not his purpose been in his own words, to "educate school teachers for our desolate valley, & many ministers for our dying world"?

[1]See William Cogswell, *The Harbinger of the Millennium* (Boston—1833). The *New York Evangelist* and other religious and reform periodicals give an excellent idea of this great Christian purpose of the age. See also Asa Mahan on "Reform" in the *Oberlin Evangelist,* Mar. 13, 27, Apr. 24, May 8, and Aug. 14, 1844. On England and France see D. C. Somervell, *English Thought in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1929), 22–29 and 99–104, and Charles H. Pouthas, *Guizot Pendant la Restauration* (Paris—c. 1923), 342–349.

[2]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Sept. 10, 1851.



CHARLES GRANDISON FINNEY

(From a daguerreotype of Professor and Mrs. Finney taken in England in 1850, lent by the late William C. Cochran, Cincinnati)

Throughout his life Finney jealously guarded this predominant religious emphasis. In 1846 we find Lewis Tappan sympathizing with his efforts to block the attempt of some faculty members "to make Oberlin a literary institution at the sacrifice of its religious character."[3] In 1859 Finney wrote from England to Henry Cowles: "No one has written me of any special religious interest there. This oppresses me. I have no hope for Oberlin if their zeal for the conversion of souls & the sanctification of believers abates & subsides. It matters not at all to me how much of money or of students or of any thing else they have. The more of these things the worse if the leaders fail to be intently aggressive in the direction of *spiritual progress*. . . . What is to be done to hold the college to the point for which it was established?"[4] Further similarly critical letters led the faculty and resident trustees to address a joint letter to the absent President in the following year assuring him that they regarded "the spiritual culture of our pupils as more important than all other culture & their salvation paramount by far to all other interests." In 1862 the first aim of the College was declared in an official announcement to be "to teach and enforce divine truth and promote sound piety." Two years later Finney was reported as still insisting that Oberlin "should make the conversion of sinners and the sanctification of Christians the paramount work and subordinate to this all the educational operations."[5] In early Oberlin learning was always looked upon as the handmaid of religion.

The course of study was designed to fulfill this aim. Bible study and Hebrew were emphasized and Greek and Latin "heathen classics" put in second place, "on the ground that the poetry of God's inspired prophets is better for the *heart* and at least as good for the head as that of Pagans."[6] The faculty took a very direct interest in the welfare of the students' souls in class and out. In 1837 the professors visited the students in their rooms and held "religious conversation with each student for the purpose of awakening a better state of religious feeling in Coll[ege]." In

[3]Lewis Tappan to C. G. Finney, Mar. 31, 1846 (Tappan Letter Books).
[4]C. G. Finney to Henry Cowles, Feb. 15, 1859 (Cowles MSS).
[5]John Keep *et al.* to C. G. Finney, July 21, 1860 (Finney MSS); *Oberlin Evangelist,* Oct. 8, 1862, and John Morgan to Mark Hopkins, Feb. 26, 1864 (Morgan-Hopkins MSS).
[6]Shipherd *et al.* in *Oberlin Evangelist,* Apr. 10, 1839. Also see below, Chapter XXIII.

1843 the Prudential Committee made an investigation of "the present apparent lack of vital piety in the Institution as well as of the very depressed state of the Treasury." Official reports treated the state of piety as a matter of the first importance. "The moral and religious state of the pupils is deemed to be encouraging. Truth seems in general to gain ready access to their minds and hearts; conversions are frequent; and a healthy tone of moral sentiment is sustained." So the faculty declared in 1855.[7] In 1859 the trustees called upon the faculty and Ladies' Board to prepare "a report of the religious state of the pupils during the year including the number of hopeful conversions & students making profession of religion." In 1862 Mrs. Dascomb stated in the report of the Female Department: "While we have had no special outpouring of the Spirit, occasional conversions have encouraged our hearts." Four years later she recorded "a good degree of seriousness and earnestness on the part of our pupils regarding the salvation of the soul." The hope was that, as was reported to be the case with the class of 1842, the students might be morally and spiritually transformed during their connection with the institution.[8]

Finney's purpose in coming to Oberlin was to train the Lane Rebels and others to go out as evangelists and spread the revival movement of the Western New York type. It was his theory that the conversion of sinners was the first essential to the Millennium, which, once accomplished, would be followed by the comparatively easy success of other reforms.[9] Immediately after the inaugural services and Commencement in July of 1835 the Big Tent or "Lord's Tabernacle," in which these exercises had been held, was struck, and President Mahan and the older theological students began a revival campaign with it in neighboring towns. Despite the fact that Finney was unable to take part because of his poor health, Shipherd could report that, "God filled it [the

[7]F. M., Mar. 8, June 14, 1837; P. C. M., July 10, 1843, and *Oberlin Evangelist,* Aug. 15, 1855.

[8]T. M., Aug. 19, 1859; Mrs. Dascomb's reports dated Aug. 25, 1862, and Aug. 21, 1866 (Trustees' MSS, Misc. Archives), and Sherlock Bristol's statement in his Commencement Oration, "The Liberty of the Sons of God," delivered Aug. 23, 1842, and published in the *Oberlin Evangelist,* Jan. 4, 1843.

[9]S. W. Streeter, J. A. Thome, etc., to Theodore Weld, Aug. 9, 1836 (Weld MSS). In 1844 Professor Finney said in a lecture to the Oberlin Maternal Association, ". . . Mere outward reform is of no avail—Reform of the heart is alone able to secure permanent good." Oberlin Maternal Association, MS Minutes, Oct. 22, 1844.

tent] and made it the birth place of many souls." A similar tour was made in the following year.[10] Every year young men students (even though unlicensed) went out as revivalists during vacations and as supply preachers on the Sabbath. They were supposed to obtain permits from the faculty but seem generally to have been encouraged.[11]

Efforts were made to keep religious interest alive at all times but special periods of spiritual outpouring were of common occurrence. Oberlin's leaders took great pride in these revivals and certainly no student generation passed without taking part in one.

From 1836 to 1842 the revival spirit was kept up almost continuously. At a Thursday Lecture early in October of 1836 the students passed a resolution "that they had better have a protracted meeting & a day of fasting & prayer." Classes were suspended and a religious reawakening of unusual power was experienced under the preaching of Mahan and Finney.[12] In the autumn of 1838 the *Evangelist* declared that "during the entire year" the College had been "blessed with the special influences of the Holy Ghost." "A revival of religion," continued the account, "has been constantly enjoyed." In February of 1840 James Fairchild wrote that the special meetings were of "uncommon interest": "Everyone seems to have set himself to seek the Lord and he has certainly not forgotten to be gracious." Finney led. "During the past week he has preached twice a day," wrote Fairchild, "and seems every day to gather more strength and fresh energy. If any man, save Paul, was ever caught up to the third heaven to hear unspeakable words, it must have been Mr. F."[13] In the summer of 1841 a revival grew out of a day of prayer for rain. "Both the natural rain and the rain of grace seemed to descend together. . . ." In February of the following year the *Evangelist* could report "a revival of great interest" lasting through several weeks.[14]

[10]*New York Evangelist,* Oct. 10, 1835; Xenophon Betts to A. Peters, Nov. 21, 1835 (A H. M. S. MSS), and J. Keep to Gerrit Smith, Oct. 14, 1836 (Gerrit Smith MSS).

[11]F. M., Sept., 1837.

[12]Davis Prudden to Peter Prudden, Oct. 7, 1836 (Prudden-Allen MSS), and Delazon Smith, *Op. Cit.,* 41 *et seq.*

[13]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Nov. 1, 1838, and James H. Fairchild to Mary Kellogg, Feb. 11, 1840 (Fairchild MSS).

[14]*Oberlin Evangelist,* July 21, 1841, and Feb. 2, 1842.

Though these revivals were undoubtedly periods of intense religious excitement, demonstrations or "exercises" of the Kentucky type were evidently generally lacking. In 1839 an article appeared in various religious papers in the East describing a meeting at Oberlin—"a mixed prayer-meeting, of young men and young ladies, in which one of the number . . . from the excess of his emotions had fallen prostrate on the floor, and the rest were clapping their hands, shouting 'Glory to God,' and making all sorts of noisy demonstrations about him." President Mahan in a letter to the *New York Evangelist* admitted the general accuracy of the description of the particular meeting but insisted that it was exceptional and unprecedented. It is quite clear from his statement that Oberlin leaders certainly did not encourage this sort of thing.[15]

Undoubtedly an examination of the records for that purpose would reveal a period of religious reawakening in practically every academic year. A few examples, however, will suffice to illustrate. In 1850 a young lady student wrote to a friend: "There is preaching every morning at half past ten. At six in the evening there is an inquiry meeting held at the music hall, and a prayer meeting at the chapel. At seven those at the music hall come to the chapel where we have preaching, after which the anxious (both professors and non-professors) are requested to take their seats forward. A great many go forward, to be prayed for. The inquiry meetings are full, both of persons and of interest, and a few have yielded themselves to God."[16] In the following year the *Evangelist* announced that Professor Finney had preached daily for two weeks and many students had been converted.[17]

When, in 1860, Finney returned from a two years' sojourn in England, an unusually successful revival was stirred up. Mrs. Finney wrote of it to an English friend: "It is such a season as we have not seen in Oberlin as long as I lived here and as much as I have seen in days gone past of the workings of our Lord in this community. On Sunday Evg I go to the ladies' Hall where I meet a large number of young ladies; on Monday I meet about 200 more; Tuesday & Wednesday & Thursday I hold a general meet-

[15]*New York Evangelist*, Nov. 23, and Dec. 21, 1839. Finney described this excitement in an unpublished portion of his MS Memoirs.

[16]Minerva P. Dayton [and Josephine A. P. Cushman] to Helen Cowles, Feb. 15, 1850 (Cowles–Little MSS).

[17]*Oberlin Evangelist*, Oct. 8, 1851.

ing for all females and besides this have two other meetings a day to attend."[18] During this revival a prayer meeting was held every morning at eight, at four in the afternoon on three days of the week, besides inquiry meetings three evenings and regular church meetings three afternoons a week, not to mention the regular Sabbath services. The special female prayer services mentioned by Mrs. Finney were additional! This revival, despite the physical collapse of President Finney, continued for over two months. "Such a breaking down and humbling of the church I have never seen in Oberlin," wrote Mrs. Finney.[19] Here was excellent proof that the old power of Finney and the old piety of Oberlin were not yet gone.

Hot from the fires built by Finney, students and colonists went out to nearby settlements, to the East, to the Far West, to the West Indies, and to Africa to kindle new flames and finally, it was hoped, set the world ablaze for Christ.[20] Thus was Shipherd's dream fulfilled that Oberlin should be a center of Christian influence in the Mississippi Valley and in the world beyond.

As Shipherd was a Sabbath School organizer before he went west it is not surprising that Oberlin students should have been encouraged from the very beginning to teach Sunday Schools in surrounding communities. Usually two young men would go together to a neighboring school district, secure the use of the schoolhouse for the Sabbath, and there hold their religious services: Bible classes, juvenile classes, etc. "We generally go out on Saturday afternoon," wrote a young man in 1835, " . . . attend S.S. in the morning, and then have two exercises at the usual time of holding public worship." Sometimes the more advanced students would preach. At first this was done without any formal organization but later the Oberlin Sabbath School Association was formed to coordinate and guide the work. In 1858 twenty schools were thus being maintained, mostly in schoolhouses but one in a barn. Forty student teachers were employed, and carriages and horses were furnished to those who must travel to the

[18]P. A. [and C. G.] Finney to Mr. and Mrs. James Barlow, Oct. 26, 1860 (O. C. Lib.).

[19]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Oct. 24, 1860; E. A. Finney to Mr. and Mrs. Barlow, Dec. 22, 1860 (O. C. Lib.), and *University Quarterly,* III, 179 (Jan., 1861).

[20]The best chapter in Delavan L. Leonard's *The Story of Oberlin* is that on "Oberlin's Contribution to Missions." It deserves the attention of anyone interested in the subject.

more distant points. A circulating library of over five hundred religious works was owned by the association. By 1861 the number of student teachers had increased to 59, the number of schools to 23, and the average attendance to 586. Revivals were reported as occasionally springing from the seed thus planted.[21] The practical training given to the teachers was perhaps as important as the effect upon the pupils. A teacher in the hamlet of Pittsfield one year might very possibly be carrying the Gospel to the Negroes in Africa, to the West Indies, or to the Indians of our own West a year later.

Closely associated with the Sabbath School Society and of earlier organization was the Oberlin Bible Society. This was a society of students, teachers and colonists which imported Bibles, collected subscriptions, and sold or donated the Bibles to the people of the town and neighborhood. Between fifty and a hundred Bibles were thus distributed in 1840-41. The final purpose of the society was to see that in Russia Township "every family be supplied with a Bible."[22] The Bible Society continued active until well after the Civil War.

Interest in missions was always strong in Oberlin. Of forty "female" students who reported their future intentions in 1836, seventeen declared that they hoped to enter the mission field.[23] At that time Oberlin had six different missionary societies: the Foreign Missionary *Fraternity* with thirty-six members—all pledged to be missionaries, the Foreign Missionary *Society,* the Home Missionary Society, the Ladies' Missionary Society, and two societies of enquiry![24] E. Henry Fairchild, James Fairchild's brother, then a college student, wrote to a friend in the spring of 1835: "Where is a single spot that does not present a field of action? Our own country is calling loudly for preachers, China lies open and Millions of benighted heathen present their claims on us. India this very moment needs a thousand [*torn*] ful mis-

[21]I. O. Beardslee to Ezra H. Beardslee, Sept. 10, 1835 (copy in office of the Assistant to the President). The colonists' letter of June 11, 1833, reported the beginning of Sabbath School work. See Chauncey N. Pond, "Ohio Sunday-School History," Ohio Church History Society, *Papers,* III, 1–20 (Oberlin—1892); *Oberlin Student's Monthly* (Dec. 1858), I, 77–78, and *Oberlin Evangelist,* Oct. 23, 1861.

[22]Oberlin Bible Society, MS Report, Apr. 21, 1841 (Misc. Archives), and MS Records, Nov. 18, 1867.

[23]MSS in Misc. Archives.

[24]Letter from E. P. Ingersoll and C. S. Renshaw, Feb. 7, 1836, *Emancipator,* May 11, 1837.

sionaries. Ethiopia is stretching forth her hands to God and the isles are waiting for his law, and what shall we do? Will we make this promise, we will do what we can? Oh! let us feel that we are agents in carrying forward the work of God, let us aim to be the benefactors of human souls, and surely the thorns and thistles that are strewed along our path will be turned to pleasant flowers."[25] The romantic attraction of the foreign field was always strongly felt by the students. A young girl, a student in the college, reported in her diary in 1856 a ride in the country with two girl friends: "All us three and only us three together made us think of Africa. We may be there all three alone together, in the course of a few years. Things look very so now, though perhaps not in Africa but some other heathen place."[26] The highest vocation to which anyone in Oberlin could aspire was that of spreading the "Good News" at home or abroad.

Oberlinites took an active interest in evangelizing the American Indians. P. P. Stewart, the associate of the Founder, had been a missionary to the Choctaws. Groups of Oberlin missionaries went among the Indians of Oregon and the tribes on the shores of Lake Superior.

In the summer of 1838 the religious needs of the Indians beyond the Rocky Mountains were presented at a meeting of the "Oberlin Missionary Society." The facts presented were "of thrilling interest" to many present.[27] Jason Lee, a Methodist missionary, had started the work in the Willamette Valley in 1834. In 1836 Dr. and Mrs. Marcus Whitman and Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Spalding had gone out under the supervision of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, a Presbyterian-Congregationalist organization. Their reports led to widespread interest in the Oregon missions throughout the American churches. Two members of the audience at Oberlin were stirred to action: J. S. Griffin and Asahel Munger.

John Smith Griffin, a native of Vermont, entered the Oberlin Theological Seminary in 1836 and graduated in August of 1838. The call to Oregon came to him just as he was preparing to go out into the work of the world. He secured his dismission from

[25][James and] E. Henry Fairchild to Joseph B. Clark, Apr. 2, 1835 (lent by Miss Edith M. Clark of Oberlin).
[26]Mary Cowles, MS Diary, June 17, 1856.
[27]"Rev. George T. Hornell" in *Oberlin Students' Monthly*, I, 405 (Sept., 1859).

the Oberlin Church in September. Asahel Munger, a carpenter and joiner of Lockport, New York, was one of the first Oberlin colonists of 1833. Munger also heard the call and "solicited the opinion of the [Oberlin] Church respecting his qualification as a mechanick labourer and teacher on a mission to the rocky Mountains." It "was Resolved that under *present circumstances* the church can not feel justified in recommending to Br. & Sister Munger to embark in their proposed missionary expedition."[28] But they were not to be stayed by this rebuff. Griffin and the Mungers joined forces and persuaded the Congregational Association of North Litchfield, Connecticut, to fit them out for the mission.

February found them at St. Louis where Griffin met and forthwith married Desire Smith, a sister of the second Mrs. H. H. Spalding. In April, 1839, they set out on horseback across the plains with a mixed party under the guidance of the famous mountain man, Paul Richardson, an employee of the American Fur Company. The hardships met along the trail were such as were to be expected at that time. There were hailstorms and windstorms. Great herds of buffalo and bands of Indians were encountered. Rivers must be crossed and recrossed, either by wading or in "bull boats made of buffalo hides and poles." On one occasion Munger was thrown by a mule and his shoulder broken. They visited the trappers' rendezvous on the Green River and were horror-stricken at the amount of raw alcohol imbibed. To add to their troubles there was disagreement within the party. Several fellow travelers separated from them when they were only a few days out. Differences arose between the Griffins and the Mungers, especially because Munger blamed Griffin for the diet which made Mrs. Munger unwell. Finally, the Snake Indians stole some of their horses.[29]

At Fort Walla Walla, the Griffins left the Mungers and pro-

[28]Oberlin Church, MS Records, Sept. 28, and Oct. 5, 1838.

[29]"Diary of Asahel Munger and Wife" in *The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society* (Dec., 1907), VIII, 387–405; George H. Himes, *Souvenir of the Eighty-Second Anniversary of the Organization of the First American Civil Government West of the Rocky Mountains, etc.* (Portland, Oregon—1925); H. H. Bancroft, *Oregon* (San Francisco—1886), I, 238–239, and Thomas J. Farnham, "Travels in the Great Western Prairies" in R. G. Thwaites, *Early Western Travels* (Cleveland—1906), XXVIII, 274–276. The author is indebted to Miss Nellie B. Pipes, Librarian of the Oregon Historical Society, Portland, Oregon, for much assistance in the preparation of this account.

ceeded to the Spalding's station at Lapwai, where Griffin secured employment as a blacksmith for the winter. Munger went to the Whitmans at Waiilatpu where he was employed at his trade of carpenter in finishing their house.[30] Narcissa Whitman wrote to her mother early in October of 1839: "Two missionaries from the Oberlin Institute have come here—I mean to Oregon—for the purpose of establishing a self-supporting mission. Rev. Mr. Griffin and wife, and Mr. Munger and wife. They will find it very difficult to get along, probably, upon that system. Mr. Munger has engaged to finish off our house. . . . Mr. Griffin and wife are at Mr. Spalding's and must labor for their food this winter."[31]

Griffin, who is reputed to have been "a man of strong opinions," had some trouble in establishing himself in missionary work, making two unsuccessful attempts to found missions among the Snakes. For a while he was chaplain for the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Vancouver on the Columbia. In 1841 the company helped start him in as a farmer. Two years later he took part in the famous Champoeg convention, where he voted for the establishment of the provisional Oregon government. In 1848 he edited and published the *Oregon American and Evangelical Unionist,* one of the first periodicals published in the Northwest. He lived until 1899. Munger became mentally deranged, started to go back East, gave it up and, in 1841, while employed by the Methodist Mission at Salem, threw himself on a bed of hot coals and thus took his own life.[32]

It was in 1843 that the Oberlin mission to the Indians of upper Minnesota was started. Robert Stuart, prominent in the Astoria expedition and employed in the early forties as Indian Agent for Michigan with headquarters at Detroit, was interested in Oberlin and sent his son there to study for a while. On a visit to the Institute he suggested that some of the pious graduates anxious to do Christian service ought to undertake the conversion of the Ojibway Indians. The idea, we are not surprised to hear, was favorably received, and when Frederick Ayer, an

[30]"Diary of Asahel Munger and Wife," *Loc. Cit.,* 404–405.

[31]Narcissa Whitman to mother, Wieletpoo, Oct. 9, 1839, 19th Annual Reunion of the Oregon Pioneer Association for 1891, *Transactions,* (Portland—1892), 129.

[32]Bancroft, *Op. Cit.,* I, 239–240 note, and Narcissa Whitman, *Loc. Cit.,* Oct. 1, 1841, and Mar. 17, 1842. The best account of Griffin's career is in Caroline C. Dobbs, *Men of Champoeg* (Portland—1932), 87–90.

American Board missionary of some years' experience in Minnesota, came to Oberlin looking for helpers, several men offered their services to the Board. They were, however, uniformly refused commissions because of the Oberlin stand on perfection and slavery. In June of 1843, therefore, the Western Evangelical Missionary Society was founded especially to sponsor this Indian mission. This society was almost exclusively an Oberlin organization, eight of the nine members of the Executive Committee being Oberlin men.[33]

This committee immediately proceeded to accept and send to the West eight missionaries. Among the first and leading members were Mr. and Mrs. Alonzo Barnard, S. G. Wright and D. B. Spencer. The region around Lake Superior was then still a howling wilderness: St. Paul was but a row of dirty cabins; there were no other towns west of Sault Ste. Marie. Spencer went ahead in the spring of 1843 to prepare the way and when he wrote a letter to Professor Finney's children soon after his arrival it had to be carried to Sault Ste. Marie to be mailed.[34]

The rest of the missionaries followed in the summer, after having been formally commissioned by the new missionary society. As with the Mungers and Griffins the last stage of the journey was performed under the guidance of agents of the American Fur Company. They were taken in a company schooner from Sault Ste. Marie to La Pointe, a trading post on an island near the western extremity of Lake Superior. From La Pointe they travelled in canoes and on foot to the mission field around Red Lake and Leech Lake. The hardships of the young wives on this journey must have been almost unendurable. Wives were felt to be very helpful and necessary in the work and in 1846 Sela G. Wright, a bachelor, returned to Oberlin to get him one. With the help of the Female Principal he selected a young lady and, after three interviews, married her and took her back to the mission.[35] With their own hands these missionaries

[33]S. G. Wright, "Some Reminiscences of the Early Oberlin Missionaries in Northwestern Minnesota" (MS in Oberlin College Library), 46–47; F. H. Foster, "The Oberlin Ojibway Mission," Ohio Church History Society, *Papers,* II, 1–25 (Oberlin—1892) based on Wright's manuscript; Leonard, *Op. Cit.*, 329 *et seq.*; Charles M. Gates "The Red Lake Mission," a radio talk delivered over KSTP, Jan. 2, 1935; *Oberlin Evangelist,* July 5, 1843, and *Ohio Observer,* Dec. 18, 1844. See also General Association of the Western Reserve, MS Records, June 14–15, 1843.

[34]David B. Spencer to Helen, Charles, Norton and Julia Finney, Aug. 13, 1843 (Finney MSS); Robert Stuart to William Dawes, June 26, 1843 (Treas. Off., File I).

cleared the land, built their cabins, schoolhouses, and church buildings and raised their own food and some for the starving Indians.

The mission was maintained until 1859. At least eighteen Oberlin students worked in it at one time or another. None of them received regular salaries. They got along as best they could on contributions from the Indians and occasional gifts from missionary societies in Oberlin and various Oberlinite churches. In 1852 Mrs. Shipherd recommended to the Oberlin Maternal Association "that each member of the Association, who might feel disposed, should obtain coarse, strong cotton cloth, and make a shirt for a man of common size" to be "sold to the Indians, and the avails used to support an Indian child in school." The visits of missionaries at Oberlin helped keep up interest in the work. Much valuable publicity came to the cause through the sojourn of the converted Indian squaw Hannah in Oberlin in 1848 and 1849.[36] Schools were maintained (one of them on the manual labor principle); the Indians were taught to raise vegetables and wear white men's clothes; a number were believed to have been converted to Christianity. Barnard wrote a schoolbook in the Ojibway tongue.[37] But the climate was very severe; the Indians seem not to have been of the best type; the children did not take to books; whiskey became more plentiful as the years passed and frontier towns were established nearby. It was the whiskey that led to the final abandonment of the mission.

Oberlin's most important missionary work was done not among the Indians but among the Negroes. This field, however, will be treated in a subsequent chapter.[38]

Oberlin was originally founded under the Presbyterian-Congregational Plan of Union, hence the occasional references to its Presbyterian origin. Shipherd was a member of the Huron Presbytery; Mahan had been the minister of a Presbyterian

[35]S. G. Wright, *Op. Cit.*, 1–6; D. L. Leonard, *Op. Cit.*, and James Peery Schell, *In the Ojibway Country* (Walhalla, N. D.—1911), *passim.*

[36]Oberlin Maternal Association, MS Minutes, Mar. 4, 1852, and *Oberlin Evangelist,* Feb. 14, 28, 1849.

[37]Published at Oberlin in 1849. There is an interesting report of the work of the mission in a printed circular letter sent out in 1853. A copy sent by Bardwell to Gerrit Smith, Apr. 4, 1853, is in the Gerrit Smith MSS. I have been informed by a local historian of northern Minnesota that traditional stories of the Oberlin missionaries still survive among the Indians of that region.

[38]See below, Chapter XIX.

church in Cincinnati. Professors Finney, Morgan and Cowles were all connected with presbytery.

Well before the founding of Oberlin some of the more zealous Congregationalists on the Reserve had attempted to withdraw and form a purely Congregational association and, in 1834, as a result of their activities the Independent Congregational Union of the Western Reserve was founded at Williamsfield, Ohio.[39] Oberlin took no part in this organization, but, in 1835, when "delegates from more than twenty churches, and about the same number of ministers assembled in convention at Hudson, . . . to confer together on the expediency of a new Ecclesiastical organization of churches on the Western Reserve," President Mahan and Professor John P. Cowles of Oberlin were among the active participants. This convention resulted in secession from the Plan of Union and the founding of the General Association of the Western Reserve of which the radical Oberlin Collegiate Institute became the nucleus and head as the conservative Western Reserve College at Hudson was the heart of the Plan of Union-Presbyterian organization. The Congregational convention of 1836 was held at Oberlin. The constitution as drawn up and adopted at this meeting and revised in 1837 declared that the chief purpose of the association was "to maintain approved Congregational usages, to cherish adherence to the system of doctrine generally received by the orthodox Congregational churches in New England, to facilitate and promote christian intercourse and communion with one another, to support and aid each other in difficulties and trials, and to unite their counsels and efforts for the welfare of the churches, the salvation of souls, and the general interest of Christs' kingdom."[40] Also in 1837 a local association was formed at Oberlin including the Congregational churches of Lorain County and known as the Lorain County Congregational Association. It was practically exclu-

[39]James H. Fairchild, "The Story of Congregationalism on the Western Reserve", Ohio Church History Society, *Papers,* V, 1–27; Delavan L. Leonard, *The Story of Oberlin,* 339–352, and D. L. Leonard, *A Century of Congregationalism in Ohio* (Oberlin—1896), 68–70. The Anti-Oberlin statement of the case is in William S. Kennedy, *The Plan of Union; or a History of the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches of the Western Reserve; etc.* (Hudson, Ohio—1856) reviewed by Henry Cowles in the *Oberlin Evangelist,* Aug. 27, Sept. 10, 24 and Oct. 8, 1856. See also Charles Zorbaugh, "The Plan of Union in Ohio," *Church History,* VI, 145–164 (June, 1937).

[40]General Association of the Western Reserve, MS Records, 1835–50 (O. C. Lib.).

sively an Oberlin enterprise and its chief service seems to have been to ordain the graduates of the Theological Department of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute.[41] This was an important function, however, for the presbyteries usually denied ordination to the young men from Oberlin because of the radical views on theology and slavery held there.

Meanwhile Congregationalists elsewhere in the West were revolting against the Presbyterian domination, and associations were established in western New York, Iowa, Michigan and Illinois. In southern Ohio the Marietta Consociation had been formed and it was from this body that the call came in 1852 for a convention of all Ohio Congregational churches. When the convention assembled at Mansfield, of the forty ministers present sixteen were either members of the Oberlin faculty or Oberlin graduates. The expected controversy between the Oberlin radicals and the more conservative Congregational element did not develop; the Congregational Conference of Ohio was organized and a constitution and articles of faith drawn up and adopted. The General Association of the Western Reserve was absorbed into the state association.[42] Oberlin, with its large church membership (in 1854 ten times as large as that of any other Congregational church in Ohio) and its Theological Department, became naturally a powerful influence in this state organization. The association, as would be expected considering this Oberlin influence, took a firm stand in favor of all sorts of reforms: temperance, anti-slavery, etc. In 1852 also a general convention of Congregationalists from all over the United States was held at Albany, N. Y. John Keep, John Morgan and a number of Oberlin graduates were present among the delegates who came from sixteen states and territories.[43] Experimental and non-conformist Oberlin was much more at home in Congregational independency than under the dogmatic and authoritarian Presbyterian regime. Congregationalism in the Yankee belt from Vermont to Kansas and even in California and Oregon became thoroughly seasoned with Oberlin radicalism.

[41]Lorain County Congregational Association, MS Records, 1837–52 (O. C. Lib.).

[42]*Proceedings of the Ohio Congregational Convention Held at Mansfield . . . 1852* (Cleveland—1852).

[43]*Proceedings of the General Convention of Congregational Ministers and Delegates in the United States, Held at Albany, N. Y., on the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th of October, 1852, etc.* (New York—1852).

The period was one of many new religious dispensations and several of them touched Oberlin. One Oberlin student, Lorenzo Snow, became dissatisfied with Oberlin's religious doctrines and joined Joseph Smith's Mormons at Kirtland. He eventually became the husband of nine wives, and a prominent leader, missionary and, at last, president of the Church of Latter Day Saints.[44] It was inevitable that the spirit-rappings heard by the Fox sisters near Rochester should interest Oberlin. At least one "medium" visited the community, but most people were skeptical. The *Evangelist* declared spiritualism to be "irrational, anti-scriptural, delusive and mischievous."[45]

William Miller was a Yankee New Yorker who spent his youth at Hampton, Washington County, about ten miles from Shipherd's home. He concluded, after a meticulous examination of the Bible, that the World would come to an end in 1843 and the thousand-years reign of Christ would begin. In 1836 he published his main arguments in a book entitled *Evidence from Scripture and History of the Second Coming of Christ, about the Year 1843*. More widely circulated was *Miller's Works,* edited by Joshua V. Himes and published at Boston in 1841. Miller sent a copy of it to Professor Finney with his compliments.[46] Apparently a considerable number of the less orthodox Yankees were converted. The most influential converts were the Rev. Mr. Himes, an abolitionist clergyman of Boston, and the Rev. Charles Fitch, a New England Congregational minister who had previously accepted the Oberlin doctrine of "Sanctification."[47]

Charles Fitch came to Cleveland where he gathered a little flock of followers in the famous "Round Church," especially provided with a great central skylight through which on the "final day" their ascension was to take place. He wrote letters to the *Oberlin Evangelist* in behalf of the millennial doctrine and

[44]See President Kimball Young's sketch of Lorenzo Snow in the *Dictionary of American Biography,* and Eliza R. S. Smith, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow* (Salt Lake City—1884).

[45]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Feb. 4, Nov. 24, 1852.

[46]This inscribed copy is in the Oberlin College Library.

[47]*Oberlin Evangelist,* June 17, 1840. On the Adventist Movement and Fitch see: Clara M. Sears, *Days of Delusion* (Boston—1924); L. A. M. Bosworth, "A Stormy Epoch," Ohio Church History Society, *Papers,* VI, 1–22 (Oberlin—1895); Everett Dick's sketches of Miller and J. V. Himes in the *D. A. B.,* and A. C. Ludlow, *The Old Stone Church* (Cleveland—1920), 143–145.

Henry Cowles answered him in a dozen articles under the title "No Millennium." Oberlin couldn't believe that a revolutionary millennium would come until it had had a chance to convert the World to Christ. But Oberlin maintained free speech, and Fitch defended his thesis in eight lectures in Oberlin in September, 1842. "He thinks Christ will descend with a sound of the trumpet," reported the *Evangelist,* "—the righteous dead will be raised—the righteous living changed—and all taken up together into the air—that the world will then be destroyed, a new earth filled up, which the righteous shall inhabit with Christ till the end of a thousand years, when Satan will be loosed for a little season . . . and the righteous inhabit the new earth forever." When 1843 and most of 1844 had passed and no trumpet had sounded the *Evangelist* "affectionately and fraternally" invited the Second Adventists back "to reengage in the work of converting the world to Jesus Christ."[48]

Oberlin had its own peculiar heresy, looked upon by many religious leaders as fully as dangerous as adventism, Mormonism or spiritualism. From the beginning Oberlin leaders followed Finney in rejecting the extreme Calvinist doctrine of election, and maintained their belief in human ability, *i. e.,* the doctrine that sinners are responsible for their own sins and for their own regeneration and that they are free to seek or reject the salvation offered by Jesus Christ. The "heresy" variously called "perfectionism," "sanctification" or "holiness," which brought down upon the head of Oberlin and Oberlinites so much opprobrium, was merely an expansion of this doctrine.[49]

In the autumn of 1836, as we have seen, a series of particularly intense revival meetings were held. Every effort was made by President Mahan and Professor Finney and associated members of the faculty to win impenitent students to Christ and, beyond that, to encourage the converted to a more complete victory over temptation. As a larger and larger proportion of the students and colonists was added to the list of the converted church mem-

[48]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Sept. 28, 1842; Nov. 6, 1844, and *passim.*

[49]There is an extensive literature. The best accounts are James H. Fairchild "The Doctrine of Sanctification at Oberlin," *Congregational Quarterly* (Apr., 1876), N. S. VIII, 237–259, and the excellent chapter on "The Oberlin Theology" in Frank H. Foster, *A Genetic History of the New England Theology* (Chicago—1907). The denunciations of the Oberlin theology and this doctrine in particular by the Calvinists are summarized in Benjamin B. Warfield, *Perfectionism* (New York—1931), II, 3–215.

bers, more attention was given to the effort on the part of these Christians to live a life more acceptable to Christ. After one sermon devoted to an appeal to Christians to be more Christ-like, a young man arose and asked how completely he could hope to attain such an aim—how completely he could expect to overcome temptation. President Mahan was especially impressed by the enquiry and, after much thought and prayer, he propounded to the people of Oberlin the doctrine of "Christian Perfection" or "Sanctification." Christ, he replied to the young man, will give you a complete victory over temptation as He gives pardon for sins committed. Christ, if you let Him, will sanctify you in this life and help you to live sinlessly and attain to "Christian Perfection" before death.[50]

How stimulating was the hope thus offered! No longer were Christians in Oberlin to be oppressed by the belief that man was totally and utterly depraved and that even his best acts were "a stench in the nostrils of the Lord," nor by that almost equally discouraging theory of Leonard Bacon's that man was commanded to be perfect and could be perfect *but never would!* By laying hold on righteousness, by consecrating the will simply and wholly to the good, by complete faith in Christ, a new "baptism of the Holy Spirit" (sometimes called "the blessing") might be attained and a positively good life, pleasing to God, thereafter, be lived.

Mahan was careful to point out that this sanctification did not mean "the certainty of never sinning again," nor "emancipation from all temptation." What it did mean, he declared, was emancipation of the will from "the thraldom of sin," "emancipation of the intelligence from the darkness & tendencies of sin & introduction into 'God's marvelous light,'" and a "consequent change in the sensibility so that the balance of its tendencies shall always be in favor of holiness."[51] Of course the Oberlin doctrine, which was subscribed to, in perhaps slightly differing forms, by Finney, Henry Cowles and John Morgan, was confused with antinomian perfectionism of the variety advocated by John Humphrey Noyes, the theology which formed later the theoretical basis for the sexual experiments of the Oneida Community.

[50]Asa Mahan, *Out of Darkness into Light* (Boston and New York–c., 1876), 140–141, and *passim*.

[51]Asa Mahan's MS Notebook (in the office of the President of Adrian College, Michigan).

As early as 1837, Henry Cowles, seeing the danger of such a confusion, wrote to the *Cleveland Observer* denying that anyone at Oberlin believed that, "we can in such a sense receive Christ that He shall act in us and displace our moral agency and personal responsibility so that we *cannot* sin." Such a belief it is clear enough would be entirely inconsistent with the Oberlin doctrine of human ability and responsibility. "Now I have never yet seen the man who holds those sentiments," continued Professor Cowles, "and I am sure that none of our students have any views of the kind at all."[52]

All of the Oberlin theologians wrote and preached about this doctrine, but Mahan's *Christian Perfection,* published in 1839, was the most elaborate and most influential presentation. A great stir was caused among Christians throughout the North by the enunciation of this point of view in Mahan's book and in the preaching and writing of his colleagues. Catharine Beecher wrote to Finney from Cincinnati, in November of 1839:

"On my return from N. Eng. this fall I came within an ace of coming to see you & the rest of the good people at Oberlin, of whom rumour speaks somewhat strangely—as if we might *there* see what I had never hoped to see but in Heaven.

"However, while stopping at Rochester with bro. George & his wife, I read the Oberlin Evan[gelist], Pres. Mahans vol. & heard from sister Sarah other items that in the end led me to see matters, probably very much in their true aspect.

"After reading Pres. Mahans work I came to this conclusion—there *is* a practical difficulty resulting from past views of christian imperfection that needs to be met *somehow* & tho' the right way is not yet *clearly* seen— yet *discussion* will bring it out before a great while & Oberlin is helping along. . . .

"I rather think they [the Oberlin people] are in the predicament of Cowper when he says *I have caught an idea by the tail.* I think in time you will have *the whole* subject mastered in all its perfect proportions."[53]

Most of the comment was, however, much less sympathetic; in fact, almost all of it was unfavorable. The Reverend John Calvin,

[52]Henry Cowles in the *Cleveland Observer,* Nov. 16, 1837. In the third volume of Finney's *Lectures on Systematic Theology* (Oberlin—1847) over 250 pages are devoted to Sanctification.

[53]Catharine E. Beecher to C. G. Finney, Nov. 4, 1839 (Finney MSS).

a staunch supporter of his namesake, wrote to the *New York Evangelist:* "No event has occurred since the great revivals of 1830 and 1831, which to my mind, has been as ominous to the best interests of the Church of Christ, as the appearance of that book [Mahan's *Christian Perfection*], in connection with the stand that is taken on the subject of Perfection at Oberlin."[54] The Chenango Presbytery in New York adopted a special resolution denouncing the doctrine:

"Whereas, the doctrine that sinless perfection or entire sanctification is attained in the present life, is contrary to the teachings of the Holy Scriptures, as well as dangerous, if not utterly destructive to the life and growth of true holiness, and whereas efforts have been extensively made, and are still making through the *Oberlin Evangelist,* and by some professed preachers of the gospel for the spread of this delusive error—an error so artfully combined with some of the most precious truths of the Bible, as to deceive, were it possible, the very elect;

"Therefore, resolved, That it is the duty of the churches in connection with this Presbytery, to discountenance the publications which disseminate this pernicious and delusive error; and not to invite its preachers into their pulpits, nor listen to their instructions."[55]

The Presbytery of Cleveland felt it necessary to appoint a special committee to refute the doctrine and confound the Oberlinites. In 1841 the Presbytery published an eighty-four-page pamphlet prepared by this committee, and entirely devoted to the denunciation of the dangerous error of the Oberlin theologians.[56] In the same year the Synod of Ohio adopted a resolution declaring: "We regard the errors of that body called the Oberlin Association, as very great, and exceedingly dangerous and corrupting in their tendency; and would warn all our people to beware of them. Their preachers ought, by no means, to be received by our Churches as orthodox ministers of the word, nor ought the members of their churches to be admitted to communion, unless they shall renounce those errors, and give evidence of true faith and holiness."[57]

[54] *New York Evangelist,* Sept. 28, 1839.
[55] *Ibid.,* Oct. 9, 1841.
[56] S. B. Canfield *et al., An Exposition of the Peculiarities, Difficulties and Tendencies of Oberlin Perfectionism* (Cleveland—1841).
[57] *Oberlin Evangelist,* Nov. 9, 1842.

When the Fairchild brothers, after finishing their course in the Oberlin Theological Department, applied to the Huron Presbytery for a license to preach, that body refused even to examine them because they would not renounce their belief "in the doctrines taught at Oberlin and in their way of doing things."[58] The connection between the controversy over perfectionism and that over the Plan of Union and the rivalry between Oberlin and Hudson can easily be perceived. Orthodox Calvinism, the Plan of Union, conservatism with regard to the reforms of the day, distrust of revivalism, and Western Reserve College were on one side; Sanctification, Congregationalism, enthusiasm for reform, "new measures," and Oberlin were on the other.

The "Oberlin Perfectionists" assumed the offensive in July of 1841 when "a meeting of those interested in the doctrine of Entire Sanctification" convened in the First Methodist Church at Rochester, N. Y. President Mahan delivered the opening sermon. A resolution was unanimously adopted, "That entire sanctification in this life is attainable, in such a sense as to be an object of pursuit, with a rational expectation of attaining it." The committee appointed to prepare tracts "in illustration and defense of the doctrine of entire sanctification of believers in this life" was made up entirely of Oberlinites: Finney, Morgan, Cowles, and Father Shipherd.[59] In 1842 conventions of Oberlin Perfectionists were held at Buffalo and LeRoy, New York, and in 1843 at Medina and Strongsville, Ohio, Shipherd playing the leading role as sponsor and organizer.[60] Perfectionist congregations, often under the ministration of Oberlinites, were established in New York City, Rochester, Strongsville, Buffalo, and several other towns in western New York and northern Ohio. In far-off Siam, two American missionaries were dismissed by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions because they embraced the Oberlin heresy.[61]

[58]Leonard, *A Century of Congregationalism in Ohio* (Oberlin—1896), 51.

[59]*Tracts on the Holiness Practicable to Christians, in the Present Life, No. 1, Rochester Convention, July, 1841* (Oberlin—1841).

[60]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Aug. 17, Oct. 26, 1842; Apr. 12, June 7, 1843.

[61]First Congregational Society of Strongsville, MS Records, 1842–43; Ferdinand Ward, *Rochester Churches,* 149–150; Levi Parsons, *Rochester Presbytery,* 227–8, and *Oberlin Evangelist,* May 11, 1842 and May 10, 1848 Dan B., Bradley was one of these missionaries; Dr. Dan Freeman Bradley was his son.

For a few years during the forties Sanctification occupied the center of interest at Oberlin. The students who believed that they had experienced the "blessing" formed an exclusive praying circle in which they discussed their experience.[62] In 1840 a young lady student wrote to her parents that she had been favored with "exalted and glorious manifestations of God himself, and . . . assurance that there is power in his grace to overcome *all*, yes *all* sin and all relish or inclination to sin!!" She continued: "*I* have . . . departed from Christ. But he is leading me to desire and pray for this great blessing, for entire and permanent sanctification. Yes, I do desire it, and I believe the Lord *will do* this work for me. I feel that there is a power in the Gospel which very few christians have known anything about. There are some most precious promises in the bible which assure us that this work shall be done. My soul grasps these promises with delight."[63] When Charles Livingstone reached Oberlin from far-away Scotland in 1840 he came immediately under the influence of Oberlin's peculiar doctrines. "My endeared Parents and Sisters," he wrote, "it is now Sabbath evening; all is calm & peaceful. I have heard Mr. Finney preach from 1st Peter 6–7 and President Mahan in the afternoon from Romans 8 & 15. Such sermons I never [heard] before. There is considerable prejudice in many parts of America against Oberlin because we believe the promise of our dear Saviour that he will save us from our sins in this life and, that being delivered from our enemies, [we] should serve him in love without fear all the days of our life. It is because [of] the power and willingness of our Saviour to sanctify us wholly & to preserve our whole spirit & soul & body blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."[64] A large number of students naturally devoted themselves earnestly to the effort to find the great experience of "the blessing." Some did so undoubtedly to the detriment of their health and their intellectual attainment.

Zeal for sanctification did not last long. Oberlinites, in general, soon came to the conclusion that too much introspection was required in the struggle for perfection and that it was better to devote one's time to doing God's will to the best of one's ability.

[62]Fairchild, *Loc. Cit.*, 243–244.

[63]Sarah Ingersoll to David Ingersoll, Mar. 5, 1840 (lent by Mrs. Friedrich Lehmann, Oberlin, Ohio).

[64]Charles Livingstone to parents, May 22 [1840] (O. C. Library Misc. MSS).

Father Keep's advice to students that they "press on for the attainment of entire sanctification" but "show their attainments by their works rather than by their declarations" bore good fruit.[65] Oberlin Christians became so busy as missionaries, preachers, teachers and advocates of Christian reform that they found less and less time to court the "baptism of the Holy Spirit." Interest in the doctrine died out because Oberlin's leaders and Oberlin thought generally were fundamentally objective, and sanctification, on the other hand, was subjective.

In the meantime, as the years passed and nothing particularly terrible came out of Oberlin, most church people lost their fear of the Oberlin doctrines, and Oberlinites were accepted everywhere as Christians of a practical turn of mind who were doing good in their own effective way. The Mansfield and Albany Congregational conventions of 1852 were not only important as marking the death of the Plan of Union but also as Love Feasts at which the Oberlin heretics were fraternally received into the fold by their Congregationalist brethren. "It is time this terror of Oberlin were frankly and honestly discarded, East and West," wrote the editor of the conservative *New Englander* in commenting on the Albany Convention. "It is a conviction to which we are fast attaining, that God had his own purposes both in the Oberlin which was and that which is; that notwithstanding its defects or excesses, it served God in introducing an element greatly needed in the Christian experience and thinking of the age; that it won our thoughts to features of gracious life and character, which the current theologies and practice of the times were leading us to forget. We trust that its effect, in the whole, will not be to leave a dangerous error, but to correct a loose and shallow type of religion more fatal than any error." The rift between Oberlin heterodoxy and Congregational orthodoxy was finally and completely closed at the Oberlin Council of 1871.[66]

The Oberlin religious theories were rationalizations in theological terms of Oberlin's practical philosophy of action. Oberlin was from the beginning intensely ethical; its force was thrown into the scales, without stint or reserve, on the side of righteousness. Righteousness was interpreted as love of God and fellow

[65]John Keep to Lydia Keep, May 18, 1839 (Keep MSS).

[66]"The Congregational Convention," *New Englander,* XI, 78 (Feb., 1853), and Williston Walker, *Op. Cit.,* 570–576.

men. In a discussion in 1839 the question was put, "Why ought I to love my neighbor?" President Mahan answered, "Because I perceive intuitively that it is right." Professor Cowles said, "Because my love will be useful to my neighbor." Professor Finney pleased everybody with the solution, "I ought to love my neighbor because his welfare is valuable."[67] The doctrine of human ability was the natural expression of this strong emphasis on righteousness, *i.e.*, on ethics, for it placed the responsibility for the choice between love and sin upon the individual. Love and ethics were, of course, the motivating power for the Christian reform movements of the period, which were often all called "moral" reforms, though the term was also used in a more restricted sense as applying to one branch of reform. The reformers working for a millennial society could hardly be expected to believe in man's total and hopeless depravity. The Oberlin doctrine of sanctification taught that man was capable (with Christ's aid) of achieving his highest aims as an individual and socially, of creating a society on earth which should be an earthly counterpart of Paradise. It was man's privilege and duty, said the Oberlin thinkers, to live a perfectly ethical and righteous life and to create a perfectly ethical and righteous social order.[68]

The entire man—spiritual, mental and physical—must be "sanctified." Shipherd wrote to his brother: "To be sanctified in body, etc. we must know more of Physiology. As an essential means of holiness I am now studying 'Graham's Science of H$^{m}$ Life'. . . . Next to searching the Scriptures & a few spiritual commentaries like Bro. Mahan's, Bro. Finney's & Bro. Fitch's writings I would urge you (if need be) to *search* Graham's Science of Human Life."[69] Another Oberlin reformer, an advocate of the peace cause, showed his appreciation of this connection between the doctrine of Sanctification or Perfectionism and reform. "The doctrine we hold here," he wrote from Oberlin, "that it is the privilege of every Christian to be perfectly in sympathy with Christ, pledges us to do all that we believe he would

[67]In this connection another Oberlin doctrine—that of the "simplicity of moral action" is of interest. See Fairchild, *Loc. Cit.*, and W. E. C. Wright, "Oberlin's Contribution to Ethics" in *Bibliotheca Sacra* (July, 1900), LVII, 429–444.

[68]". . . God requires of creatures nothing but what, by proffered grace, they are able to render, . . ."—Asa Mahan, "Reform" in the *Oberlin Evangelist*, Aug. 14, 1844.

[69]J. J. Shipherd to Fayette Shipherd, Apr. 16, 1841 (Shipherd-Randolph MSS).

have us do in favor of Peace. *By their fruits ye shall know them.*"[70] This, then was the Oberlin purpose; to live the righteous life, encourage others to do so and, as the agents of the Lord, help to establish the Millennium.

Shipherd's statements of 1833 and 1834 chiefly emphasize the religious purpose of the colony and Institute. Beginning with the re-founding of 1835, however, the social aim is also given a large place in all declarations of objects. "By precept and example we are taught to take a deep interest in all the great moral enterprises of the day," wrote a committee of college students to the English patrons in 1839, "to prize nothing more highly than the elevation of humanity. In short to cultivate a sympathy with Him who died that we might live."[71] On the same occasion the faculty prepared a statement of Oberlin principles: " . . . In the class of *external habits,* economy, frugality, industry, and self denial—in our mental system, real thinking, rigid discipline & a truly christian course of study in which the Bible & whatever facilitates the understanding, the cordial reception & wide propagation of its truths shall be the main things—in our *social system* the hearty recognition of equal human rights as belonging to all whom God has made in his own image; a deep sympathy with the oppressed of every color, in every clime; and a consecration of life to the well being of suffering humanity—& finally this paramount principle, that the cultivation of the moral feelings is the first of all objects in education, Gospel love to God & man, the first of all acquisitions & more precious than all other disciplines."[72]

It should not be supposed that the religious aim was lost sight of. It was still the primary one. In 1840 the trustees officially resolved that "the great object of this Institution" was "To supply the world with the best means of grace."[73] Of course, the religious and the social objects were inseparable in the fully

[70]D. W. Ide in *Burritt's Christian Citizen,* Feb. 2, 1850.

[71]William Cochran *et al.* to Keep and Dawes, May 13, 1839 (Treas. Off., File G).

[72]Original, undated, in Misc. Archives, headed "To the Trustees, patrons & friends of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute," written in 1839 as internal evidence shows. Shipherd's prospectus for his "Lagrange Collegiate Institute" (*New York Evangelist,* Apr. 22, 1837) states, ". . . This institution will allow free discussion, and openly sustain the great moral enterprises of the day—such as revivals, temperance in all things, the strict observance of the Sabbath, moral reform, Christian union, human rights, under whatever color or circumstances, etc."

[73]T. M., Feb. 19, 1840.

developed Oberlin philosophy in which piety expressed itself in benevolence. This is made clear in the statement of aims adopted by the trustees on the occasion of Shipherd's death. It follows:

"1st, the education of youth of both sexes in strict accordance with the spirit & aims of the gospel, developing the mental powers in connection with a judicious system of manual labor to preserve the body sound & healthy & the growth of a vigorous & aggressive piety.

"2nd, To beget & to confirm in the process of education the habit of self denial, patient endurance, a chastened moral courage & a devout consecration of the whole being to God; in seeking to promote the best good of man.

"3rd, So deeply to fill the mind & to imbue the character with the principles of Christian benevolence, that those educated in this Seminary may be well qualified to engage uncompromisingly in the practical enforcement of the teachings of Christ & in his spirit, for the annihilation of the chattel principle as applied to man, for the removal of all oppression, for the abolition of every form of sin & for the establishment & perpetuity of universal liberty.

"4th, To expunge from the list of books studied such portions of the heathen classics as pollute & debase the mind & to restore the Holy Bible to its place as a permanent text book in the whole course of intellectual training.

"5th, To act efficiently for the purification of the Church & the Ministry & thus furnish the World with a class of pious men & women intellectual & holy who shall firmly maintain aggressive action *against* all which God forbids & in support of all that God requires.

"6th, To maintain a College which shall present a permanent practical protest against the prejudice so wickedly cherished by the inhabitants of this Country towards the Colored people & which shall afford the youth of both sexes among them, all its advantages irrespective of color or of caste."[74]

At the time of the endowment drive, in 1851, the Prudential Committee published a statement of "objects," "wants," and "claims." It is probably the best single statement of the Oberlin

[74]T. M., Aug. 26, 1845. Also in separate MS in Misc. Archives and in abbreviated form in *Oberlin Evangelist,* Sept. 10, 1845.

Program. The objects were declared to be: 1. "To afford the means of a liberal and thorough education at so low a price that it may be within the reach of the humblest and most indigent class of students." 2. "The union of physical with mental culture . . ." 3. " . . . The thorough education of women." 4. " . . . To educate men for practical life." 5. " . . . The cultivation of the spirit of progress, the encouragement of every judicious and enlightened reform." 6. " . . . The inculcation of a liberal yet evangelical and practical Christianity." 7. " . . . The training of a band of self-denying, hardy, intelligent, efficient laborers, of both sexes, for the world's enlightenment and regeneration."[75] Oberlin was, by this date, prepared to claim considerable achievements. As to her work for reform the committee proudly boasted: "Oberlin College has been greatly successful in making her students intelligent and vigorous reformers. The friends of unpopular but needed Reform have rarely looked to her in vain. For this they have blessed her. For this the world has cursed her, and while it has cursed, has reverenced and honored her."

Oberlin's chief spokesman on reform was Asa Mahan. In an address to the American Physiological Society in 1839 and in a series of articles on "Reform" published in the *Evangelist* in 1844 he elaborated on the principles taught and practiced at Oberlin.[76] Mahan declared that the true Christian reformers were neither reactionaries, believing that the fathers "were the men, and that wisdom died with them," nor radicals, aiming at the dissolution of existing institutions, but moderate, practical men working for "the correction of existing abuses, and the conformity of all institutions, domestic, civil, and ecclesiastical, to the fundamental ideas of universal reason, and the pattern on the mount." "Ingenuous liberality" he held to be the correct spirit of reform. The reformer must never be dogmatic. "He should never speak as one having authority. He should ever appear as an honest, earnest inquirer in the boundless field of knowledge—an inquirer, who believes he has some important truth, and is anxious to present it to the world, and yet fully sensible, that he may have connected with that truth some im-

[75] *Oberlin Evangelist,* Dec. 3, 1851.

[76] *Advocate of Moral Reform,* June 15, 1839, and *Oberlin Evangelist,* Feb. 28, Mar. 13, 27, Apr. 24, May 8, and Aug. 14, 1844.

portant error." Open-mindedness must be associated with enthusiasm for the truth, but that enthusiasm must never be allowed to become fanaticism. "I had much rather err with an honest inquirer, than be right with the bigot. . . ." "I fully believe," Mahan continued, "that he is among the number who have gained the most complete victory 'over the beast, and over his image, and over the number of his name,' who, together with the most sacred regard for truth and right, is in his own bosom, the most perfectly free from the spirit of intolerance." Oberlinites prided themselves on their practice of hearing all sides of every case, a tradition of which President Mahan was the peculiar sponsor.

Reform, according to Mahan's formula, could never be dissociated from Christianity nor Christianity from reform. The Bible was the most important aid to man's reason in determining correct objects of reform; and no man destitute of the true spirit of reform was in any full sense a Christian. Mahan's definition of reform and of practical Christianity amounted to essentially the same thing. "The fundamental spirit and aim of Christianity," he wrote, "is the correction of all abuses, a universal conformity to the laws of our existence as far as revealed to the mind, and a quenchless thirst for knowledge on all subjects pertaining to the duties and the interest of humanity." It is not, therefore, surprising to discover that the adjective "moral" was applied to the Oberlin school of reform as a synonym for Christian, and error, wrong, immorality considered identical with sin. This identification of Christianity with reform and the classification of all wrong as sin made it easy to carry over the Oberlin doctrine of "Perfectionism" or Sanctification to the field of social philosophy and social action. It thus became the privilege and duty of men to go onward with the help of God toward perfection in all things.

All were especially warned against "ultraism." "Ultras" Mahan described as those so-called reformers who put the chief emphasis on form rather than principle, who were impractical in their ideas, characterized by a spirit of denunciation and hate and were narrowly and fanatically devoted to one special reform. This classification was, obviously, intended to include the "come-outers" of the Garrison-Foster type, the monomaniacs who appeared occasionally in each of the movements, and probably

also the non-resistants and women's rights advocates.[77] The reformer must put principle first and must not be blinded by mere form. He must be mentally sound and well-balanced, a practical man and, especially, he must be motivated by benevolence. He must eschew all personal denunciation; if he testified against oppression it should be because he loved the oppressed and oppressors too. Finally, he must recognize the existence of many legitimate and desirable reforms, interrelated and interdependent.

The true reformer, held Mahan, was a *universal* reformer, seeking the correction of all evils. No man, said he, could consistently be a temperance advocate and not an opponent of slavery nor an enemy of war and not a sponsor of moral reform. He recognized that the "great reformatory movement of the age" was legitimately divided into special departments, but insisted that it was equally true that all real reforms were "based upon one and the same principle, to wit, that *whatever is ascertained to be contrary to the rights, and destructive to the true interests of humanity, ought to be corrected.*" For this reason every evil: "intemperance, licentiousness, war, violations of physical law in respect to food, drink, dress, and ecclesiastical, civil, and domestic tyranny," ought to be corrected. "Reform is manifold and yet it is one. *E Pluribus unum.*" Theodore Weld in a letter to Lewis Tappan expressed the same idea: "God has called SOME prophets," he wrote, "*some apostles,* some leaders. All the members of the body of Christ have not the same office. Let Delavan drive Temperance, McDowell—Moral Reform, Finney—Revivals, Tappan—Anti-Slavery etc. Each of them is bound to make his own *peculiar* department his main business, and to promote *collaterally* as much as he can the other objects."[78] This conception was the current one among the Christian reformers associated with Oberlin.

Nor did Oberlinites neglect to put the theory into practice; they supported all "legitimate" reforms. Because of the large contribution made in those fields, special attention will be given to the anti-slavery movement, the peace movement, "Physiological Reform," moral reform, and educational experiment.

[77]There is a list of "Ultraisms" in the *New York Evangelist,* Oct. 26, 1839. Oberlinites would have agreed only partially. Probably everyone would have a slightly variant list.

[78]Weld to Tappan, Nov. 17, 1835 (Weld MSS).

## CHAPTER XVIII

# *HOTBED OF ABOLITIONISM*

IT WAS in February, 1835, that the trustees had finally agreed that the new anti-slavery faculty should have exclusive control of the internal administration of the institution, and resolved that "the education of people of color . . . should be encouraged & sustained." In April "One of the Trustees" wrote to an Ohio periodical that, beyond a doubt, the institution would "be known as the *decided opponent* of SLAVERY as it is practiced upon the colored people of this country."[1] In June a concert of prayer in behalf of the "downtrodden people of color" was held. This meeting resulted directly in the formation of the Oberlin Anti-Slavery Society with 230 members. "Indeed," wrote Shipherd, "when the motion to resolve ourselves into an Anti-slavery Society was decided by rising, the congregation came up en masse, arm and soul to this good work of God."[2] Shipherd himself became the first president, and he and Finney and Mahan were the first to subscribe to the constitution. This document, the original of which is preserved in the Oberlin College Library, is practically an exact copy of the constitution of the Lane Seminary society. This was natural, as the Oberlin Anti-Slavery Society was, to all intents and purposes, the Lane society *redivivus*. The object of the organization was "the immediate emancipation of the whole colored race within the United States," an object to be attained by "moral suasion," *i.e.* by the new-measures revival technique.

The interest in the cause was intensified by the series of inspired lectures delivered by Theodore Weld in the unfinished assembly room of Ladies' Hall in the fall. "I have been here ten days," Weld wrote to Tappan in November, "lectured every day —occupied the Sabbath with the Bible argument—and expect to

[1]*Ohio Observer,* Apr. 9, 1835.
[2]John J. Shipherd, July 6, 1835, in the *New York Evangelist,* July 18, 1835, also *Ohio Observer,* July 16, 1835.

next Sabbath. Our meetings are held in one of the new buildings. It is neither plastered nor lathed and the only seats are rough boards—thrown upon blocks. And you may judge something of the interest felt at Oberlin on the subject of abolition when I tell you that from five to six hundred males and females attend every night and sit *shivering* on the rough boards without fire these cold nights without any thing to lean back against—and this until nine o'clock."[3]

By winter the membership of the Oberlin Anti-Slavery Society had increased to three hundred. In December the Young Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society and the Female Anti-Slavery Society were organized with 86 and 48 charter members respectively. The history of the latter society was continuous at least to 1855. The Oberlin Young Men's Anti-Slavery Society was in existence at least as early as 1842, was reorganized in 1851 and was still holding meetings in 1853. In 1852 their organization numbered among its speakers such prominent leaders of the anti-slavery movement as C. C. Burleigh, Salmon P. Chase and John P. Hale. This society was chiefly interested in the "social and moral elevation of the colored race" through the maintenance of schools for the Negroes of northern Ohio.[4] After the first few years the Oberlin Anti-Slavery Society ceased to function as a formal organization but the term was sometimes, appropriately enough, applied to the whole unanimously anti-slavery community (college and colony) when gathered in the frequent mass meetings held for the discussion of anti-slavery matters.

The first anti-slavery center in northern Ohio was, of course, Western Reserve College at Hudson during the incumbency of that remarkable faculty: C. B. Storrs, Elizur Wright, Jr., and Beriah Green. But Western Reserve College, as we have seen, was purged, and the anti-slavery leadership passed naturally to Oberlin. At the meeting of the Western Reserve Anti-Slavery Society in 1835 John Keep, President Mahan, Theodore Weld and the Hon. Zebulon R. Shipherd (father of the founder of Oberlin) were the star speakers. In 1836 the annual meeting,

[3]Weld to Arthur Tappan, Nov. 17, 1835 (Weld MSS). Also in Barnes and Dumond, *Op. Cit.*, I, 244.

[4]American Anti-Slavery Society, *Third Annual Report*, 1836, page 98; Helen Cowles, *Grace Victorious* (Oberlin—1848), 141; *Oberlin Evangelist*, Aug. 15, 1855; Union Society, MS Minutes, Apr. 13, 1842, and Young Men's Anti-Slavery Society, MS Minutes, 1851–1853.

originally scheduled to meet in the chapel at Hudson, was adjourned to Oberlin.[5]

In the fall of 1834 this society had sent out a call for a state convention of abolitionists. Most of the Lane Rebels, Timothy B. Hudson, then a student in the Collegiate Department at Oberlin, and Professor Henry Cowles were among the delegates when the convention assembled at Putnam. Weld and Cowles played an active part, Weld drafting the "Declaration of Sentiment" and Professor Cowles drawing up the constitution. Reports on the "condition of the people of color" were submitted by Lane seceders. Professor Finney was elected to be one of the vice-presidents and President Mahan one of the "managers." A letter from President Mahan, expressing his allegiance to abolition principles, is printed in the appendix of the published proceedings.[6] Under such good Oberlin auspices were the activities of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society inaugurated.

The first anniversary was scheduled for Granville, but the churches and other meeting places in town were closed to the trouble-making reformers. "The Abolitionists so far acceded to their wishes," wrote "Rebel" Augustus Wattles to the *Emancipator,* "as to build a large temporary temple on a hill about 1-4 of a mile out of the village. I have written to Oberlin for the students to come down in season to put it up." The "temporary temple," located on Hubert Howe Bancroft's father's farm, was later used as a barn; whether it was raised by Oberlin students or not the records do not make clear. But there were enough Oberlinites among the delegates to have done it. President Mahan and Professor Henry Cowles, who led the Oberlin contingent, were hospitably entertained in the home of Asa Drury (Yale, 1829), Professor of Languages at the Granville Literary and Theological Institute and president of the Granville Anti-Slavery Society.

Twenty-six persons from Oberlin were present among the delegates who crowded the temple-barn "from the hay-gallery to the stable."[7] When the members of the society were all comfort-

[5]*Ohio Observer,* Sept. 3, 1835, and Aug. 25, 1836.

[6]*Ibid.,* Oct. 16, 1834, cited in Clayton Ellsworth, "Oberlin and the Anti-Slavery Movement" (MS), 42, and *Proceedings of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Convention, Held at Putnam, . . . 1835* (n.p.).

[7]At least six other Oberlin students, temporarily absent from school at the time or not yet affiliated with the Institute were listed from other addresses:

ably bestowed in the loft and on the freshly hewn beams, the speakers took the wagon floor. James G. Birney introduced a resolution calling for the full and free discussion of the subject of slavery throughout the North. James A. Thome, Lane Rebel and Oberlinite, read "An Appeal to the Females of Ohio." Professor Cowles called for a show of hands in favor of the abolition of slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia. John Rankin denounced the cruelties of the middle passage. President Mahan introduced a motion declaring it to be "the duty of the church to debar from her privileges all who persist in the sin of holding their fellowmen in the bondage of slavery." F. D. Parish of Sandusky City attacked the Ohio "Black Laws," moved that the thanks of the society "be respectfully tendered to Ashley Bancroft for the use of his barn," and recommended that the delegates "heartily forgive the unkindness of that portion of our fellow-citizens, which rendered it necessary to hold our meeting in so unusual a place." A final resolution was adopted unanimously (as were all the others) thanking the citizens of Granville and vicinity for their hospitality, whereupon the Ohio abolitionists adjourned and returned to the town amid a shower of rotten eggs. Some of the delegates were assaulted with clubs; an Oberlin student, William Lewis, was knocked down. It was soon after this convention that Professor Drury was dismissed from Granville Institute (later Denison University) and at least one student left for Oberlin. Those who went out to lecture against slavery in nearby communities were sometimes mistreated. John Alvord, another "Rebel" and Oberlin "theolog," had some trouble at a schoolhouse meeting. "A violent mob," wrote Thome to Weld, "attacked the house, broke in the windows—sash & all—throwing in stones of several pounds weight.... Several . . . were *egged* from head to foot. The audience sallied out and drove off the mob, cudgeling them after the *right manner*." There was just about enough persecution to maintain the enthusiasm of the reformers at a high pitch.[8]

William Cochran, Amzi Barber, Joseph H. Payne, Israel Mattison, H. C. Taylor and George Clark. F. D. Parish of Sandusky and William Dawes of Hudson, both of whom became Oberlin trustees in 1839, were also delegates.

[8]Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, *Report of the First Anniversary, 1836* (Cincinnati —1836). The convention is described in letters from A. Wattles and W. T. Allan (*Emancipator,* May 5 and 12, 1836), from J. A. Thome (Barnes and Dumond, *Weld Letters,* I, 300–301), and J. G. Birney (Dumond, *Birney Letters,* I, 318–319). There are several secondary accounts, *e.g.:* C. S. Ellsworth, *Op. Cit.,* and

Throughout the rest of the history of the state society Oberlin played a significant (though perhaps proportionately less important) part. In 1837 the anniversary, held in the Friends' Meeting House at Mount Pleasant, was opened by John Keep, who delivered an address "explanatory of the objects of the convention, and followed his remarks by prayer." Ten members of the Oberlin society were present as delegates. At the 1838 anniversary in Granville (this time in the Presbyterian church), George Whipple of Oberlin was one of the secretaries. The Oberlinites came to the 1839 anniversary in force. Seventeen delegates were Oberlin residents (including students) and at least four more were former students. Professor and Mrs. Finney and Professor and Mrs. Henry Cowles represented the faculty. Among the former students, Hiram Wilson and Lorenzo Butts were active in the convention. Finney presided over part of the sessions and presented and defended a series of resolutions which were adopted. At the anniversary at Massillon in 1840 President Mahan and Professor Morgan were present and played a leading part.[9] In all of these years an Oberlin representative was included among the vice-presidents. Oberlin interest and general interest in the organization seemed to decline after 1840, probably due to the competition from the Liberty Party.[10] Closely associated with the state society in these years was the "Ohio Ladies' Society for the Education of the Free People of Color." At its 1841 meeting two Oberlin "coeds" served as secretaries. Representatives from Oberlin also took part in the meetings of the Lorain County Anti-Slavery Society.[11]

Everywhere Oberlinites were in the van. Lane Rebels repre-

Robert Price. "The Ohio Anti-Slavery Convention of 1836," and "Further Notes on Granville's Anti-Abolition Disturbances in 1836," *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly,* XLV, 173–188 (Apr., 1936), and 365–368 (Oct., 1936). See also: Hubert Howe Bancroft, *Literary Industries* (New York—1891), 34–35, and *Retrospection* (New York—1912), 84; on Drury—Denison University *Second General Catalogue, 1831–1881* (Sidney, Ohio—1881), and G. G. Wenzlaff, *Danforth* [B. Nichols] *Goes to College* (Mitchell, S. Dak.—c. 1929), 72–74, and pages 185–186 above. The Bancroft house, built of stone from the nearby quarry, still stands with the date 1834 carved in the keystone over the front door. The barn has been removed, but in 1936 part of the frame was still in use, incorporated in a barn on a neighboring farm.

[9]Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, *Reports, 1837, 1838, 1839, and 1840.* Also J. R. S. in the *Oberlin Evangelist,* July 1, 1840, and the *Emancipator,* June 1, 1837.

[10]There are reports in the *Oberlin Evangelist* for the meetings of 1841, 1842, 1843, and 1845.

[11]*Oberlin Evangelist,* June 23, 1841, and July 31, 1839.

"CONVENTION OF THE ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY, JUNE 1840." WORLD'S ANTI-SLAVERY CONVENTION

This painting, by Benjamin Robert Haydon, in the National Portrait Gallery, London, shows Thomas Clarkson addressing the convention. William Dawes is the young man fourth from the left in the highest row behind the speaker. John Keep peers between two others directly below Clarkson's upraised hand. There is an excellent portrait of Henry Brewster Stanton, Lane Rebel and anti-slavery agent, second from the right (sideburns and aquiline nose) in the front row. Stanton mentions seeing Haydon painting this picture.—*Random Recollections,* page 76.

(Reproduced with the express permission of the National Portrait Gallery)

sented Oberlin at the annual meetings of the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1835 and 1836. R. E. Gillett and Amos Dresser were present as delegates to the national convention from the Oberlin Anti-Slavery Society in 1838. President Mahan was elected one of the managers for Ohio in 1837, in which capacity he was joined by George Whipple in 1839. When the National society split in 1840 most Oberlinites went with the Anti-Garrisonian wing which became the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. President Finney spoke at the meeting of this association which took place in the Broadway Tabernacle in New York in 1851. John M. Langston, an able Negro graduate of Oberlin, addressed the other society at its 1855 anniversary.[12]

When the World's Anti-Slavery Convention met in London on June 12, 1840, Oberlin was praying for its success. The feelings of the Treasurer of the Institute were so strong, in fact, that he felt impelled to enter them in his daybook. "This day," he wrote, "convenes at London, England, the friends of Liberty from all parts of the civilized world. May the Sweet Spirit of peace preside over all their deliberations and fill every heart."[13] On the first day of this convention Thomas Clarkson was chosen chairman and Daniel O'Connell delivered an oration. On the third day James G. Birney spoke for the American anti-slavery men and in the afternoon, John Keep, "delegate from Ohio, U. S.," in his turn attacked the South's peculiar institution and presented the claims of the Oberlin Institute to the support of abolitionists the world over. At a later session the Reverend C. E. Lester read an extensive eulogy of the work of Hiram Wilson, an Oberlin graduate, among the refugees in Canada. At the international anti-slavery convention held (also in London) three years later, Wilson was present in person to ask for support in his enterprise and Amasa Walker, Professor of Political Economy at Oberlin, appeared and spoke as the regularly accredited delegate of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute and the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society.[14]

From the summer of 1835 through the summer of 1837 the North was flooded with anti-slavery agents. While Weld was

[12]American Anti-Slavery Society, *Reports*.

[13]Ledger, 1837–39 (June 12, 1840), in the Treasurer's Office.

[14]General Anti-Slavery Conventions, *Proceedings, 1840,* pages 138–143, and 311–321; *1843,* pages 206–207, 285–288, and 348. On the reverse of the title-page of the *Proceedings* for 1843 is a "Definition of Slavery" quoted from Theodore Weld.

lecturing in Ladies' Hall in November of 1835 he was, at the same time, conducting schools for anti-slavery lecturers at Oberlin and at John M. Sterling's law office in Cleveland. The other Lane Rebels were his aptest pupils. In later years Huntington Lyman described the experience in his simplified spelling. "So we formed a clas," he wrote to a number of the Oberlin faculty, "and Weld red and related and suggested and we copied and discust and swallowed. . . . We mingled a chapter on chemistry with our recitations which woz confined to the rediest way to deterge tar and fethers."[15]

There is not much point in attempting to discriminate between anti-slavery lecturers who came out of the Oneida Institute, Lane Seminary in 1833–34, and Oberlin. There were a few who had attended all three institutions, others only two, some only one—but they were all the same breed. After all, Lane's radicalism came from a transfusion from Oneida, and Oberlin's chiefly from a transfusion from both. Stanton, S. L. Gould, Edward Weed, and Weld, all anti-slavery workers of first rank, ended their careers as students at Lane and were never officially connected with Oberlin, but they were all identified with Finney and with everything that Oberlin stood for. From 1836 through 1838 Weed made Oberlin his headquarters for his lecture-tours and conducted there at least one school for agents. His wife, Phebe Mathews Weed, lived in Oberlin much of that time. After her death he married Zeruiah Porter, the first graduate of the Ladies' Course.[16]

Of the famous "Seventy" sent out as agents by the American Anti-Slavery Society in these years and recruited by Weld, Professor D. L. Dumond has tentatively identified sixty-two.[17] Sixteen from this list were or had been students at Oberlin; twelve of these had been at Lane; nineteen altogether were Lane Rebels. William T. Allan, from Alabama, Lane and Oberlin, had a long and active career as an anti-slavery agitator. In 1836 and 1837 he lectured in Ohio, New York City, western New York, and before the Michigan Anti-Slavery Society, of which Robert Stuart, fur-trader, pious Presbyterian, and friend of Finney, was president.

[15]Lyman to W. G. Frost, Jan. 28, 1887 (Alumni Records, Oberlin College).

[16]*Faith and Works; or, the Life of Edward Weed* (New York—1853), 34–76, and a letter from Weed in the *Philanthropist*, Dec. 16, 1836, quoted by C. S. Ellsworth, *Op. Cit.*, 36–37.

[17]*Birney Letters*, I, 357 note.

Later he joined with his fellow-rebel J. J. Miter, William Holyoke (one of the three liberal members of the Lane Board of Trustees at the time of the "Rebellion"), and George W. Gale (founder of Oneida Institute and Knox College) in leadership of the Illinois Anti-Slavery Society. At the 1839 convention of that organization Allan represented Lincoln's own Sangamon County.[18] Amos Dresser, an Oneida-Lane-Oberlinite, dared to invade Tennessee and got himself whipped by a vigilance committee. It was an effective martyrdom and Dresser never tired of repeating the story of it from the platform or on the printed page. The whipping of Amos Dresser became a legend.[19]

Whipping, egging, tarring and feathering, riding on a rail were apparently welcomed by the more zealous. It was thus that the accolade for distinguished service to the cause was granted. One Oberlin abolitionist preserved the coat bearing the heraldic protein and passed it on to his descendants, who a century later offered it, still showing traces of egg spatterings, as an historic relic for the College museum. A student, writing to his brother from Oberlin in the spring of 1837, reported in bombastic language the achievements and hardships of Oberlin anti-slavery advocates:

"Perhaps you will wish to know what the Oberlinites have accomplished the past winter. I assure you that they have not been idle, especially those who have pleaded the cause of the oppressed, nor has their success been small. But they were not permitted to go on unmolested by the modern mobites, for mobs followed them at evry step. S.[amuel] White was mobed near Granville. . . . The inhabitants of this place declared that no abolitionist should lecture there unless his blood moistened its soil. White, hearing of this, said he would lecture or lay his bones there. One man standing out, said to W—— did you say you would lecture or lay your bones here? I did, W—— replied. You have lectured, now your bones shall whiten the soil, at which he sprang at W—— like a tiger & attempted to kick him, but the blow was

[18]On Allan see the *Emancipator,* May 26, 1836; Jan. 19, May 4, June 29, July 20, 1837; *Philanthropist,* Nov. 26, 1839; Aug. 25, 1840; B. L. Pierce, *History of Chicago* (N. Y.—1937), I, 245 and note, and *Oberlin Evangelist,* Sept. 2, 1846.

[19]*Emancipator,* Oct., 1835; Dec. 8, 1836; Jan. 19, Feb. 9, Apr. 27, 1837, and Amos Dresser, *Narrative of the Arrest, Lynch Law Trial, and Scourging of Amos Dresser, at Nashville, Tennessee, August, 1835* (Oberlin—1849). Dresser's "narrative" was also published by the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1836 and as an appendix to his *Bible Against War* (Oberlin—1849).

parried off. . . . At length he was held across a stump by half a dozen men (by the way one good old, pious deacon held him by the hair), where they intended to cut his face & paint it with India ink, which would always remain. But they forgot that he had feet & over he kicks the dish that held it. And not being able to obtain any more they concluded to let him go, finding that they could do nothing with him. [James M.] Blakesly also has been mobed in Jamestown, where he has been lecturing. . . .

"The accounts of those who have been engaged in the cause is truely encoureging [*sic*]. Br. Parker related [an experience he had] while he was lecturing in a town comparitively [*sic*] not more than half civilized. At his second lecture when he entered the room he found a tall lusty man, with a long whip swearing that he should not lecture (he afterward found that he was the head of the mobites), & cracking his whip. At length pacified by the ladies he concluded to hear the lecturer pray. Soon B. P. began to lecture, this man dropt his whip. Soon, off comes his hat. Then he gazed attentively at the speaker & revolves every word & soon the big tears began to flow down his cheeks. After P— had finished speaking, he read a constitution & requested those who were willing to sign their names. This man immediately was up & said put down my name.

"This proves conclusively, that if the public mind at the North were only enlightened, Slavery would melt away like snow under the scorching sun of midsummer. When this time shall come, trully may America pride herself as being a land of freedom. But till then let her blush & hide her head for shame that she has been fatened by the blood of her sons."[20]

These accounts are probably repeated more or less as told by the principals to admiring fellow-students. They serve, however, to show how much Oberlin students were interested in the cause and to sustain Delazon Smith's description of their lionization of agents who were persecuted. "And if he chances," wrote Smith, "to have been so fortunate, as to have received a cowhiding, or a coat of rotten eggs, he then becomes indeed an object of their highest adoration."[21] Everywhere these agents left a trail of local anti-slavery societies. The agency of Professor J. P. Cowles to Michigan in this same winter was directly instrumental

[20]Davis [and Nancy] Prudden to G. P. Prudden, Apr. 8, 1837 (Prudden MSS).
[21]Delazon Smith, *History of Oberlin* (Cleveland—1837).

in the founding of the Michigan State Anti-Slavery Society.[22] A few anti-slavery speakers went out from Oberlin in the forties, notably Timothy B. Hudson, agent of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, but never again anything like the numbers of these first years. After 1840 the movement entered a new phase; the "revival" period, the period of "moral suasion," had passed.

In Cincinnati the Lane Rebels and the "Sisters" had engaged in social, religious, and educational work among the free Negroes to prepare them for full citizenship. Two Rebels, Augustus Wattles and Hiram Wilson, led in the continuation of this program, Wattles in Ohio and Wilson in Canada.

Wattles collected most of the data for the report on "the condition of the colored people of Cincinnati" prepared for the Lane Seminary Anti-Slavery Society in 1834–35. He took the superintendency of the Negro schools established in Cincinnati by the Rebels and later extended his activities to cover the whole state. Wattles even attempted to establish a manual labor school for Negroes on the Oneida-Oberlin plan, where they could study agriculture and physiology "as taught by Combe, Graham and Alcott." These schools were financed from various sources but particularly by the Ohio Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society of which Susan Lowe Wattles was corresponding secretary and in which Mrs. Finney, Mrs. Cowles, Elizabeth Prall and other Oberlin women played a prominent part. In 1839 Amzi D. Barber of Oberlin succeeded Wattles in charge of the Ohio colored schools. Most of the teachers came from Oberlin. In his report in 1837 Wattles wrote that he "Visited colored settlements in Brown Co. In the lower camp found a school of 55 scholars taught by a young man from Oberlin who built the house, himself," and slept in it all winter for fear whites would burn it. He continued: "On Red Oak there is an 'amalgamation' school taught by a young woman from Oberlin, . . . 20 colored scholars. Visited Springfield twice, good school of 33 scholars; teacher from Oberlin." Shubael Carver, a theological student at Oberlin, taught a colored school at Chillicothe at least two winters, assisted part of the time by his coed sister Eliza, also of Oberlin. In 1839 Barber wrote to the *Philanthropist* that there were more than twenty teachers from Oberlin teaching colored schools in Ohio and Canada. Many of those in Ohio had trouble with the

[22]Ellsworth, *Op. Cit.*, 37–39.

neighboring whites, especially in the southern part of the state. Miss Lucy Hall, a senior in the Ladies' Course, went to take charge of a Negro school at Big Bottom, Pike County. A vigilance committee threatened to tar and feather her and ride her on a rail if she did not leave. There is much about the work of Oberlin teachers in Negro schools, about their devotion and hardships, in Barber's reports of 1839 and 1840.[23]

The Lane Rebel Hiram Wilson proposed to do the same sort of thing among the fugitives who had reached the safe haven of Canada West. When Wilson graduated from the Oberlin Theological Department in the early autumn of 1836, he received twenty-five dollars from Professor Finney, contributed by some of the New York philanthropists. With this and what he could beg on the way Wilson began his work among the Negroes in Canada. He first established a series of colored schools, recruiting the teachers in Oberlin. Joseph Lawrence, one of the first to go from Oberlin, took sick after only ten weeks' teaching at Amherstburgh, and died in February, 1837. An Oberlin girl, Diana Samson, "came on . . . just before the death of brother Lawrence," Wilson reported, "and is now teaching in his stead. Her strong faith in Christ, and ardent devotion to the cause of the oppressed, are equal to the important station she occupies. . . . She has twenty-two scholars." Later in the year Wilson wrote to Elizur Wright, Jr., from a "steamboat, between Buffalo and the Falls": "I am just returning from Northern Ohio. . . . Three female teachers have started for Canada from Oberlin; one, Miss Rider, has gone up the lake to Amherstburgh. Two, Mrs. Brooks and Miss Snow, from the families of Prof. Finney and President Mahan, are with me." He added: "Three or four young men from Oberlin are to enter the field soon as teachers."[24]

Wilson, like Wattles, hoped to establish a manual labor school like Oberlin, a school which would welcome Negroes and poor whites alike, training thereby a great number of young workers for the field and breaking down race barriers. He even planned to have an associated colony where "a considerable number of pious, intelligent, worthy, white families" should mingle with

[23]*Emancipator,* July 6 and Oct. 19, 1837; *Philanthropist,* June 11, Oct. 22, Nov. 26, Dec. 21, 1839, and July 14, 21, 1840. There is a sketch of Wattles in Barnes and Dumond, *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld,* I, 90–91 note.

[24]*Emancipator,* Dec. 22, 1836; Apr. 1, May 11, Oct. 5, Dec. 28, 1837.

Negroes and take an interest "in their improvement, mental & moral." As at Oberlin, mulberry trees and sugar beets would be raised in the labor department.[25] Following this design, he established in 1842 the "British American Institute" at Dawn Mills (near the present Dresden) on the Sydenham River, Canada West. The students were to work between three and four hours a day. The aims of the Institute were declared to be: 1. "To raise up competent teachers of color to supply destitute places." 2. "To qualify young men of talent & piety to proclaim the 'glorious gospel of the blessed God' with clearness & power." 3. "To bring forth upon the Anti-Slavery battle ground Colored champions who will wage a successful warfare somewhat after the manner of the Washingtonians in the Temperance cause by narrating their woeful experience of Slavery." The financial hurdle proved to be too high and, despite a begging expedition by Wilson to England, he recognized even in 1845 that the Institute was likely to be a failure. In 1849 Wilson discontinued his connection with it.[26] It continued under other management for a while, usually referred to as Dawn Institute, but by 1850 an observer reported that it had "dwindled down to a small concern, and the managers are much embarrased by debt." Its lands were sold by a court order in 1871.[27]

From his first arrival in 1836 until his death in 1864, however, Hiram Wilson engaged as teacher, preacher and almsgiver among the colored fugitives. From 1850 to 1853 he served as agent of the Canada Mission at St. Catharines under the American Missionary Association. A disagreement in the latter year led to his severing his official connection with the national association, but he continued to cooperate unofficially. The work in Canada was undoubtedly very difficult, the fugitives being suspicious, naturally, of all white men from the United States.[28] Wilson, himself, was at first suspected of being a kidnapper but eventually

[25]Hiram Wilson to Henry Cowles, Jan. 2, 1837 (Cowles MSS).

[26]Wilson to Hamilton Hill, Apr. 25, 1843 (Treas. Off., File J), and June 12, 1845, and Jan. 6, 1849 (Treas. Off., File Q).

[27]American Missionary Associates, *Report, 1850,* page 29; H. A. Tanser, *The Settlement of Negroes in Kent County, Ontario* [c. 1939], 41–43; Josiah Henson, *Father Henson's Story of His Own Life* (Boston—1858); W. H. Seibert, *The Underground Railroad* (1898), 205–207; Canada Mission, *Seventh Annual Report;* R. S. Gee to Mahan, Apr. 30, 1843 (Treas. Off., File C), and *Oberlin Evangelist,* Nov. 5, 1845.

[28]American Missionary Association, *Report,* 1851, page 35.

came to be generally very popular with the Negroes. We have it on the contemporary testimony of a Negro preacher that he "ate, drank, slept, prayed, and preached" in the Negro cabins and that his influence over them was "almost unbounded." Fugitives from all over the United States were directed to his house where they could be sure that they would find a welcome, shelter, clothing, encouragement and aid in securing employment.[29]

In 1853 he wrote to Hamilton Hill of his work:

"Fugitives are frequently arriving who are to be clothed and cared for. But a short time since I had the pleasure of meeting a poor sable pilgrim at my door from the house of bondage. He had just come from Maryland. He was a stranger & I took him in —Hungry & I fed him—naked and I clothed him. He appeared very grateful and said he meant to be a man—that he had a wife in Toronto—& small child who had escaped last summer & he was anxious to get to them. I furnished him with some means & directed him to the Steam Boat but first gave him a spelling book. He had acquired a slight knowledge of letters which he learned in a Grave Yard where he came from, enquiring & spelling out the names of the dead. Another called on me last saturday evening, just from Hagerstown, Md. He was promptly fed & clothed & comforted. Such cases as I have named are frequent."[30] On the Sabbath he preached and conducted a colored Sabbath School and spent the remainder of the day walking up and down the Welland Canal "distributing Religious, Peace & Temperance Tracts to the Sailors," preaching on the ships and keeping a lookout for more fugitives.

Of course, the free colored and fugitive population of Oberlin became considerable and there was work to be done right at home. Negro children attended the regular schools with the whites in Oberlin, but early in the forties a school was begun "designed chiefly for adult persons who have been debarred in earlier life, by slavery or prejudice, from the advantages of

[29]Rev. C. E. Lester before the World's Anti-Slavery Convention, *Proceedings*, 1840, pages 319–320.

[30]Hiram Wilson to H. Hill, May 24, 1853 (Treas. Off., File Q). See Fred Landon, "Work of the American Missionary Association among the Negro Refugees in Canada West, 1848–1864" in *Papers and Records* of the Ontario Historical Society, XXI, and Lloyd V. Hennings, "The American Missionary Association, A Christian Anti-Slavery Society," a MS thesis presented for the Master's degree at Oberlin College, 1933.

education." The teachers were students from the Institute, among them Lucy Stone. A committee, including Hamilton Hill, J. A. Thome and Amasa Walker, was constituted to finance the enterprise.[31] This work among the Oberlin colored population was extended and systematized when the Oberlin City Missionary Society was founded in 1860. Though spiritual, moral and educational needs were recognized this organization put more emphasis on physical "relief."[32]

The anti-slavery influence in Oberlin itself was so strong that few of the nine thousand students who matriculated before the firing on Fort Sumter escaped complete conversion to the cause. Mahan, Morgan, Cowles and, perhaps occasionally, Finney preached sermons against slavery on the Sabbath. Special lectures by outsiders and faculty members were given on the evils of slavery at frequent intervals. In 1843 the faculty officially requested Professor Hudson "to deliver to our students a course of lectures on anti-slavery."[33] Lecturers from outside included, besides Weld, Cassius M. Clay, William Goodell, C. C. Burleigh, Garrison, the Fosters, Joshua R. Giddings, John P. Hale and Salmon P. Chase—speakers of varying points of view, but all zealous against slavery. An economic boycott of the products of slave labor was established in Oberlin after the formal discussion of the subject in April of 1836 and, though never consistently carried out, it was never quite abandoned in principle. The effort to grow beet sugar was considerably stimulated by the desire to furnish a substitute for slave-produced sugar.[34]

Oberlinites were taught to believe that the Fourth of July was a "cruel mockery" as it had extended freedom to whites only. In 1837 the students celebrated "the day by holding anti-slavery meetings in the neighboring villages." Two years later thirty-nine Oberlin men and women agreed henceforth to work on Independence Day and donate the proceeds for the advancement of anti-slavery. Twenty years later a young lady student wrote in her diary: "Friday the Fourth—the *glorious*—ha ha—the *glorious* Fourth. Well, so it is. God have pity on us." On July 4 1859, the same girl commented: "Liberty is dead. . . . But God

[31] *Oberlin Evangelist,* July 17, 1844.
[32] *Ibid.,* Dec. 4, 1861, and Dec. 3, 1862.
[33] F. M., Sept. 13, 1843.
[34] F. M., Apr. 13, 1836; George Prudden to Peter Prudden, Aug. 3, 1836 (Prudden—Allen MSS), and Delazon Smith, *History of Oberlin,* 59.

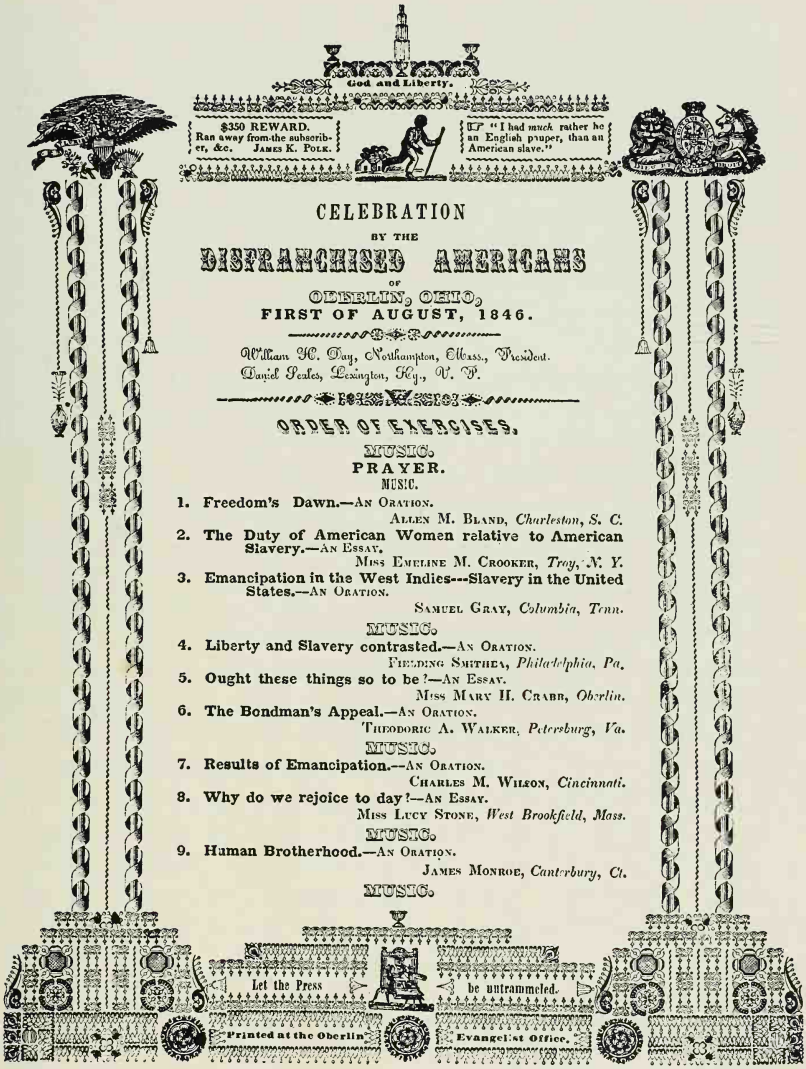
grant there is yet hope that she will arise from the dead still more beautiful and lovely."[35]

Not July 4 but August 1 was the gala day for Oberlin abolitionists. No year was allowed to pass without some recognition of the anniversary of the emanicipation of the slaves in the British West Indies. "The anniversary of the emancipation of 800,000 persons held in slavery in the British West Indies," wrote the editor of the *Evangelist* in 1842, "must be a more interesting time to the friend of human rights, than the anniversary of American Independence, so long as the principles of the declaration of that independence are so utterly disregarded by our slave holding and pro-slavery citizens." In 1842 the celebration was particularly successful. A concert of prayer for the slaves was held in the morning and a large public meeting in the afternoon. This afternoon meeting was presided over by "a brother . . . whose face is as black as a slave-holder's heart." The speakers were President Mahan, G. B. Vashon (a sophomore and a Negro born free), W. P. Newman (a freshman and an escaped slave), Professor Thome (a former slaveholder), and Professor Morgan (representing the white non-slaveholders). The day was closed with a banquet at which eighty Negroes and 170 whites sat down to the table. At the 1846 celebration the Musical Association furnished special singing; James Monroe was on the program, and Lucy Stone delivered her first stirring public speech.[36] The singing of anti-slavery songs was always a part of such occasions: Whittier's "Gone, Sold and Gone" set to music by George W. Clark, the "Song of the Coffle Gang"—"said to be sung by Slaves, as they are chained in gangs, when parting from friends for the far off South—children taken from parents, husbands from wives, and brothers from sisters," "O Pity the Slave Mother," or other selections from Clark's *Liberty Minstrel*, the favorite anti-slavery song book.

Orations and discussions at literary society meetings were certain every few weeks to drift back to the all-absorbing slavery

[35]Nancy Prudden to George Prudden, July 4, 1837 (Prudden MSS), the *Philanthropist,* July 2, 1839, cited in C. S. Ellsworth, *Op. Cit.,* 33, and Mary Louisa Cowles, MS Diary, July 4, 1856, and July 4, 1859.

[36]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Aug. 17, 1842; Musical Association, MS Minutes, July 31, 1846; program of the exercises preserved in the library of Oberlin College, and a copy of Lucy Stone's speech in the possession of her daughter, Alice Stone Blackwell.




PROGRAM OF AUGUST FIRST CELEBRATION, 1846
(Oberlin College Library)

question. Examples are numerous: "Should philandropists avoid the use of the produce of slave labor as far as they are able? [1840]", "Would it be practicable to extend the right of sufferage [*sic*] to the colored men of the nation, were they all emancipated? [1840]", and "Resolved, That the amalgamation of the white and black races in this country is feasible, proper, and should be encouraged [1859]".[37] The last was, of course, a particularly dangerous topic, even in Oberlin. The programs of rhetorical exercises and Commencements regularly included orations or essays on slavery. In 1837 a special student representative of the Oberlin Anti-Slavery Society was allotted a place; he spoke on "Slavery, A Moral Evil."[38] In commenting on the exercises of 1841 the *Evangelist* declared, "Probably no greater interest could be excited than was felt in the address on 'The Political Economy of Slavery [by John Todd, a candidate for the A. B.]', and the thrilling music that followed. An old and trembling Revolutionary Soldier was so much interested that he arose and asked leave to address the congregation, and was only prevented by the want of time." Whenever a Negro appeared upon the platform at Commencement it was pretty certain to lead to a special demonstration. In 1858—"One of the speakers . . . [was] colored, but none the less a man and a brother. His oration, followed by the anthem, 'The Gathering of the Free' produced a profound sensation."[39] Definitely abolitionist speeches were delivered repeatedly by members of the graduating classes: in 1848, "Freedom of Speech and Southern Gag Law"; in 1850, "A Plea for the Oppressed"; in 1851, "American Independence and Republican Liberty" and "The Higher Law"; in 1854, "Liberty's Final Conflict and Triumph" and "The Millennium of American Chattelism"; and in 1859 a discussion between two College seniors on "The African Slave Trade." Nor does a listing of titles give a sufficient idea of the ubiquity of the subject for it was undoubtedly often the case, as in 1839, that, though there was but "one Anti-Slavery speech, . . . every speaker gave it a blow in passing."[40]

If the anti-slavery sentiment in Oberlin was so strong and so

[37]Dialectic Association, MS Minutes, Mar. 27 and 28, 1840 and Phi Delta, June 22, 1859.

[38]Program in O. C. Lib.

[39]*Oberlin Evangelist*, Sept. 1, 1841, and Sept. 1, 1858.

[40]J. H. Fairchild to Mary Kellogg, Aug. 24, 1839 (Fairchild MSS).

general, why then did the College contribute so few abolitionist lecturers after 1837? The answer is—the answer to so many queries about Oberlin—*Finney*. Already in the autumn of 1835 Weld and Tappan were expressing dissatisfaction with Finney because of his emphasis on revivalism at the expense of reform—almost to the exclusion, they felt, of the anti-slavery cause.[41] In the following summer Finney called the Lane Rebels in Oberlin into special session to dissuade them from going into the abolition field and to persuade them to go out as revivalists instead. This does not mean, of course, that Finney had deserted the cause of anti-slavery but that he felt that the cause of Christ must come first. "Bro. Finney," Allan wrote to Weld, "has used his heart & head & influence to convince us that it is our duty to preach. He groans over the subject & speaks of himself as being agonized about it. Thus we are situated—you and Stanton groaning on one side & Finney on the other." Finney held that if the world were first converted to Christ then the great reforms could easily be accomplished, that "The only hope of the country, the church, the oppressor & the slave was in *wide spread* revivals." "Nothing," he told young men who were about to graduate from the Theological Course at Oberlin, "Nothing will make the slave holder unclinch his grasp but the horrors of Hellfire. These must be made to thunder upon his conscience or he *will still oppress*." The Rebels were torn between the two duties. In 1839 Thome admitted that "if ministers & professing christians generally were as holy in heart & strong in faith, as they should be, they would further the interests of the oppressed more effectually by preaching the cross—the *Whole Cross* I mean—than by forming Anti-Slavery Societies—composed indiscriminately of Christians, worldlings & infidels." But, he added, "while the estate of the church, the ministry, & the religious press remains as it now is, I am satisfied that direct Anti-Slavery efforts, such in the main as are now being made, are proper & necessary."[42] As would be expected, however, after the withdrawal of the Weld influence, Oberlin students, in general, accepted the theory that the best way to help the slave was to work for the coming of Christ's

[41]Weld to Lewis Tappan, Nov. 17, 1835 (Weld MSS), and in Barnes and Dumond, *Op. Cit.*, I, 242–5.

[42]Allan, Streeter, Alvord and Thome to Weld, Aug. 9, 1836, and Thome to Weld, Feb. 7, 1839 (Weld MSS), and in Barnes and Dumond, *Op. Cit.*, I, 323–9, and II, 750–3

Kingdom in which all men would be brothers. It is entirely possible that the preachers, missionaries, and pious teachers who went out from Oberlin to promote the establishment of that Kingdom, and who, at the same time, were enthusiastically devoted to the anti-slavery cause, may have done as much for the slave as the same number of anti-slavery lecturers would have done.

There is no evidence of any decline in Oberlin's zeal for the anti-slavery cause. Early and later Oberlin put its shoulder to the wheel of the anti-slavery crusade. In politics and in the church its leaders and sons and daughters fought for the freedom of their dark-skinned brothers and sisters. In the pulpit, in the schoolroom and as missionaries of the American Missionary Association Oberlin men and women worked for the freedom and elevation of the colored race. Oberlin men and women played a part in the struggle for freedom in Kansas, and fugitives from the "house of bondage" were nowhere surer of a warm welcome than at Oberlin.

## CHAPTER XIX

# *TOWARD AN ANTI-SLAVERY CHURCH*

THIS acceptance of Finney's point of view meant that Oberlinites had two battles to fight: first, to convert the Christian Church to reform, including anti-slavery, and then, second, convert the world to the Christian Church. The battle to make the church an anti-slavery society began early. In September of 1835, before Weld had begun his historic lectures, the Oberlin Church resolved: "That as Slavery is a Sin no person shall be invited to preach or Minister to this church, or Any Br. be invited to commune who is a slave holder." In 1846 the Church adopted the report of a committee of five faculty members (Thome, Morgan, Dascomb, Fairchild, and Hudson), withdrawing all "fellowship with slaveholders or with those who lend their influence to sustain slavery."[1] Until after the Civil War the Oberlin Church included in form letters given to members transferring to other churches the sentence: "This certificate is not intended as a recommendation to any church that sanctions or tolerates slaveholding."[2]

Wherever, in churches or religious organizations, Oberlin men gained sufficient influence similar resolutions were adopted. In 1839 a former Oberlin student wrote from Fitchville that the Congregational Association of Central Ohio, of which he was secretary, had adopted a resolution, "That Slavery, as it exists in these United States, is a violation of all rights—a heinous sin against God, and ought in no instance to be tollerated by the Church of Christ."[3] Of course the General Association of the Western Reserve (the "Oberlin Association") passed repeated resolutions denouncing slavery. In 1837 resolutions drawn up by W. T. Allan, one of the Lane Rebels who had attended Oberlin, were adopted by the association. By these resolutions the

[1]Oberlin Church, MS Records, Sept., 1835, and Aug. 12, 1846. The original report is in the Church MSS, also in the O. C. Lib.
[2]*Lorain County News* (Oberlin), July 11, 1866.
[3]U. T. Chamberlain in the *Oberlin Evangelist,* Dec. 18, 1839.

members of the association bound themselves to "have no Christian communion with those who practice slavery, nor with any who justify the system." They declared that "*oppression* in all its forms is sin" and that "the practice of soliciting or receiving funds from Slaveholders for the purpose of carrying on our benevolent operations is wrong." The convention at Mansfield in 1852, which resulted in the formation of the Ohio Congregational Conference, adopted resolutions declaring slavery to be "a great violation of the law of God and of the rights of man" and denying "ecclesiastical correspondence with slave holding bodies."[4]

Some churches were split apart by the differences between the abolitionist-perfectionist-Oberlin group and the more conservative faction. The Church at Strongsville, Ohio, was thus divided at the time of Shipherd's pastorate there. The radicals formed the Free Congregational Church of Strongsville, locally known as the "Oberlin Church." Preaching was mostly supplied by Oberlin professors and students until the churches re-united in 1882. Even in the church at Brownhelm a similar rift developed.[5] Out in Chicago the anti-slavery element in the Third Presbyterian Church left and founded the First Congregational Church in 1851.[6] Of course, James A. Thome's church in Cleveland was Oberlinite and abolitionist. The Oberlinite-perfectionist churches of western New York—Rochester, for example—were thoroughly abolitionized as were Broadway Tabernacle and other Finneyite churches in New York City, sometimes at the expense of a church row. In Boston, the Marlborough Chapel was a center of Finneyism, Oberlinism, perfectionism, and abolitionism.

And the Oberlin Christian abolitionists reached out a fraternal hand to friends of the slaves in other denominations. Particularly close were Oberlin's relations with the non-Calvinist and abolitionist Freewill Baptists. Their General Conference held in Ohio in 1839 declared the cause of the slave to be "the cause of God." The *Oberlin Evangelist* commended this Baptist group

[4]General Association of the Western Reserve, MS Records, June 14, 1837, and Ohio Congregational Convention, *Proceedings*, 1852, pages 12 and 14.

[5]L. G. Stone and T. E. Haynes, *History of Strongsville, Ohio* (Berea, O.,—1901), 36–39, and J. H. Fairchild, *History of the Congregational Church of Brownhelm* (Oberlin—1895).

[6]Bessie L. Pierce, *History of Chicago*, II, 365–6.

for their stand on reform, and the *Morning Star,* Freewill Baptist organ, spoke favorably of Oberlin.[7] This sect had no college of its own in the early nineteenth century and so sent its ministers or prospective ministers, perforce, to the colleges of other denominations—at least three of them to Oberlin. After an adventurous career as missionary, preacher, and religious editor, David Marks came to Oberlin with his wife to secure a formal education. Here he sickened and died and was buried in the Oberlin cemetery. Only recently the Freewill Baptists erected a new monument at his grave. Daniel Graham (Oberlin, A.B.—1844) edited the *Freewill Baptist Quarterly* for many years, and was for a while president of Hillsdale College when it was a Freewill Baptist institution. Henry E. Whipple (Oberlin, A.B.—1848) was an influential member of the same sect and left the principalship of the Oberlin Preparatory Department for a long career as a professor at Hillsdale.[8]

Friendly, too, were Oberlin's relations with the Wesleyans, Methodists who broke away from the General Conference on the slavery issue. Led by Orange Scott and Luther Lee, they held their first conference at Utica in 1843, and were always strongest in the "Finney districts." The church publication, the *True Wesleyan,* was strongly reformist.[9]

Oberlin was never narrowly denominational. It was recognized that essentials of faith and morals were much more important than labels. In 1848 the *Oberlin Evangelist* printed with "pleasure" a circular issued from Syracuse by a group of radical ministers calling for union of all Christian reformers, whatever their previous denominational connection.[10]

It was the Oberlin doctrine that slavery was a sin, according to the Bible and according to modern standards of Christian brotherhood. Oberlinites read with approval Theodore Weld's tract, *The Bible Against Slavery,* first published in 1837, Beriah

[7]*Philanthropist,* Nov. 19, 1839; *Oberlin Evangelist,* Apr. 27, 1842; Feb. 17, 1847, and Apr. 20, 1853, and G. L. Ball, "Liberty and Slavery," *Freewill Baptist Quarterly,* IX, 146–172 (Apr., 1861).

[8]H. E. Whipple, "The General Conference of the Freewill Baptist Connexion," *Freewill Baptist Quarterly,* VIII, 198–207 (Apr., 1860); *Memoir of the Life of David Marks* (Dover, N. H.—1846); Oberlin College, *Semi-Centennial Register* (1883).

[9]C. B. Swaney, *Episcopal Methodism and Slavery* (Boston—c. 1926), 106 *et seq.; Oberlin Evangelist,* Jan. 18, 1843, and sketch of "Orange Scott" in the *National Cyclopaedia of Biography.*

[10]Mar. 1, 1848.

Green's *The Church Carried Along* (1836), Charles Fitch's *Slaveholding Weighed in the Balance* (1837), J. G. Fee's *The Sinfulness of Slaveholding* (1851), and the anti-slavery theological writings of Wesleyans like Luther Lee, LaRoy Sunderland, and Lucius Matlack. When the Church Anti-Slavery Society offered a prize "for the best tract on the teachings of the Bible respecting slavery," the contest was won by an Oberlin student, Isaac Allen, for an essay entitled *Is Slavery Sanctioned by the Bible?* In 1862 Reuben Hatch (Oberlin, A.B.—1843) published his elaborate study, *Bible Servitude Re-Examined,* in which he attempted to prove that slavery in the modern sense was not sanctioned in the Sacred Scriptures.[11]

In 1847 Henry Cowles, assisted by Professor Morgan, drew up a formal report on the "Duty of Churches in Relation to Slavery." First, he declared, the church must recognize slavery as a sin—"pure unadulterated *oppression,* the very thing God abhors and most pointedly condemns." And Christians must act, too. "Let us enforce humanity and the rights of man, not only, or chiefly for humanity's sake, but for piety's sake—not only by the voice of universal man demanding his rights, but with the voice of God, proclaiming: *Set my Sons and Daughters Free. My wrath is on the oppressor.*"[12]

Oberlin Christians renounced their allegiance to all Christian benevolent societies which did not take part in the battle against the sin of slavery. The most important result of this action was the establishment of the American Missionary Association, a powerful Christian anti-slavery agency which sent its representatives into every important anti-slavery battle ground: the border states, New Mexico, Kansas.

The American Missionary Association originally grew out of a merger of the "Committee for the West India Missions," the Western Evangelical Missionary Society and the Union Missionary Society. David S. Ingraham, a Lane Rebel, led a group of Oberlin students in criticizing the American Board for allowing its missionaries among the southern Indians to hold slaves.[13] In 1837 he began missionary activities among the freedmen of Jamaica, where he was later joined by other pious abolitionists,

[11]See G. H. Hubbard, *A Classified Catalogue of the Collection of Anti-Slavery Propaganda in the Oberlin College Library* (Oberlin—1932).

[12]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Mar. 3, 1847.

[13]*Emancipator,* May 11, 1837.

several of them also from Oberlin. The "Committee for the West India Missions," including in its membership Lewis Tappan and Anson G. Phelps, was organized some time later to collect funds for this enterprise. In 1843 Oberlin men founded the Western Evangelical Missionary Society, which officially announced that it would not "solicit or knowingly receive the wages of oppression, especially the price of the bodies and souls of men, for the prosecution of the work of the Lord." The third organization, the Union Missionary Society, was an outgrowth of the Amistad Case.

The *Amistad* was a leaky old schooner which, in August, 1839, drifted into Long Island Sound and was boarded by the officers of a United States coast survey vessel. On board this "mysterious schooner" a large number of naked black savages were found in charge and also two Spaniards who were their prisoners. While being shipped as slaves they had risen and captured their masters. What should be done with them? They were mutineers, but the slave trade was illegal. Should they be freed or returned to the possession of their Spanish masters? A great deal of interest was aroused all over the country, and a committee, including Lewis Tappan, Joshua Leavitt and Anson G. Phelps, was organized in New York to fight for the Negroes' freedom in the courts. The case was carried from one court to another until finally in 1841 the blacks were freed by the Supreme Court, after Roger Baldwin and John Quincy Adams had appeared as counsel in their behalf.

The Amistad Committee continued to care for the Africans after they had been freed. They were instructed in the English language and in Christianity and it was determined to send them back to their home in Mendi on the African west coast. Funds were raised for this purpose in New England and New York, and the Union Missionary Society (mostly American Negroes) was formed to supervise and support the whites who were to go back with them and found a Christian and anti-slavery mission. In November of 1841 a farewell public meeting for the Negroes and missionaries was held in the Broadway Tabernacle. The missionaries, Rev. William Raymond and Mrs. Raymond and Rev. James Steele, were former Oberlin students except Mrs. Raymond. Steel graduated from the seminary in August, married; his wife died a few days later, and he left for Africa in the fall.

In 1846 the Union Missionary Society, the Western Evangelical Missionary Society (of Oberlin), and the Committee for the West India Missions were merged into the American Missionary Association. The *Union Missionary*, which had been the organ of the Union Missionary Society, gave way to the *American Missionary* edited by Lane Rebel George Whipple. The new organization supervised the Indian Mission in Minnesota, the Mendi Mission in Africa, the Jamaica Mission and missionary work among the Negroes in Canada and the United States. Slaveholders were excluded from membership and their contributions declined. Oberlin was a dominating factor in the society; up to 1860 over nine-tenths of all its workers were former Oberlin students, and both its able executive secretaries, George Whipple and Michael Strieby, came from Oberlin.[14]

Steele and Raymond arrived in Sierra Leone late in 1841. Steele soon returned to America on account of ill health. Raymond and Mrs. Raymond remained in Freetown through the rainy season. In 1842 Raymond arranged with King Harry Tucker of the Kaw-Mendi for the establishment of the mission. A site was selected, houses built, a school established and Christian preaching begun. Raymond and his successors not only preached the Christian faith but combated slavery, opposed the use of rum and tobacco, and sought to establish peace between the native tribes. In 1847 Raymond sent out an urgent plea for help in carrying on the work. At the same time he wrote optimistically: "Of the ultimate success of the mission I have not the least shadow of a doubt. God has planted it, and He *will not* pluck it up—the devil cannot!" A few days later he was dead.[15]

Young George Thompson was jailed in Missouri for aiding fugitive slaves. His imprisonment clinched his decision to devote his life to the Negroes. In 1846, after having been pardoned by the Governor of the State, he came to Oberlin to prepare himself for the African mission field. In April of 1848 he was examined and ordained by the Council of the American Missionary

[14]Lewis Tappan, *History of the American Missionary Association* (New York—1855), 1–24; M. E. Strieby, *Oberlin and the American Missionary Association* (Oberlin—1891), 5, 9, and *passim*. Lloyd Hennings, "The American Missionary Association, A Christian Anti-Slavery Society (MS Master's thesis done under the author's direction at Oberlin—1933)" is, by far, the best history of this society.

[15]Lewis Tappan in the *Oberlin Evangelist*, Jan. 4, 1843, and Lewis Tappan, *History*, 25 *et seq.*

Association. Rev. Sherlock Bristol of Oberlin extended to him the right hand of fellowship and George Whipple gave the charge. A hymn was sung from Professor George Allen's hymn-book. Lewis Tappan kept the minutes. Before he left New York news was received of the death of Raymond—thus Thompson became head of the mission.[16]

Reenforcements, many of them from Oberlin, followed soon. In 1849 Mar-gru (renamed Sarah Kinson) came as a missionary. She was one of those who had been on the *Amistad,* and had studied a while at Oberlin at the expense of the American Missionary Association. Eight missionaries were in the company which arrived in 1850. There were nine persons in all in the party of 1852. Samuel Gray and Mahala McGuire who were among the new recruits were American Negroes from Oberlin. They were later married. Gray took charge of construction work and acted as mechanic in charge.[17] Others came in later years. The number of Oberlin students active in this mission before the Civil War was probably about thirty. It was quite clearly an Oberlin enterprise.[18]

In the missionary work among the freedmen in the West Indies, Ingraham had the assistance of others from Oberlin. The earliest of these was James A. Preston. Preston was one of the four young men to receive in 1837 the first A.B.'s ever granted by Oberlin. He immediately entered the Theological Course, which he completed in 1841 when he married an Oberlin coed and left for Jamaica. Strieby lists 36 former Oberlin students who went to Jamaica as missionaries before 1861. Of the several different mission stations established, one was known as Oberlin.[19]

The American Missionary Association helped finance Hiram Wilson part of the time for his work among the Negroes in Canada, and sent city missionaries to serve with the free colored

[16]George Thompson to Gerrit Smith, Oct. 31, 1846 (Gerrit Smith MSS); Tappan's notes on the ordination, dated Apr. 6, 1848 (Misc. Archives), and George Thompson, *Thompson in Africa* (New York—1852), 9 and 335–337.

[17]George Thompson to Henry Cowles, Feb. 2, 1853 (Cowles MSS); S. Gray to Henry Cowles, Feb. 23, 1852 (Cowles-Little MSS).

[18]Strieby (*Op. Cit.*) lists only 16; an article in the *Oberlin Evangelist* (Oct. 8, 1862) gives 29; Leonard (*Op. Cit.*) says 36. See also George Thompson, *The Palm Land* (Cincinnati—1859), and *Letters on Africa,* I–III (Cincinnati—1855 and 1858), and *Annual Reports* of the American Missionary Association.

[19]Lewis Tappan, *Op. Cit.,* 13–17; M. E. Strieby, *Op. Cit.,* 10; and Oberlin College, *Semi-Centennial Register, 1883.*

people of Northern cities such as Syracuse, Portland and New York City.

The Association also put much emphasis on the maintenance of anti-slavery ministers and *colporteurs* (distributors of tracts) among the white citizens of the United States, particularly in the Middle West. In 1853–54 two-thirds of the home missionaries aided were in the three states of Ohio, Illinois and Wisconsin. In no year between 1850 and 1860 did the association have less than 75 missionaries in the upper Mississippi Valley.

The first requirement for one of these home missionaries was that he must be aggressively anti-slavery, must "talk it, preach it, pray it, vote it." The reports to the society contain many variations on this theme. One missionary wrote from Wisconsin that he had preached "six anti-slavery sermons, bringing God's word to bear fully on American slavery." The Rev. U. T. Chamberlain, another Lane Rebel and Oberlin graduate, preached so often and effectively on anti-slavery to his congregation in Pennsylvania that they insisted on putting anti-slavery into their confession of faith.[20]

Nor were their activities limited to preaching. Some gave weekday lectures on slavery and engaged in public debates with those who defended it. One man sent in a "Brief of an Anti-Slavery Lecture" and the *American Missionary* printed it for the assistance of others. The missionaries also distributed thousands of Christian anti-slavery tracts and books, especially those published by the allied tract publishing company, the American Reformed Tract and Book Society of Cincinnati. The tract work was especially concentrated in southern Illinois and Indiana where it was supposed to be most needed. Several *colporteurs* were sent out at different times to engage in this work exclusively.

The western anti-slavery congregations thus built up heard of the A.M.A.'s work among Negroes from their pastors and through the columns of the *American Missionary,* and were encouraged to become active participants in the cause by making contributions. So one phase of the propaganda built upon the other.

And the association was a participant, too, in the contest over slavery in the territories. After the passage of the Kansas-

[20]Data from the *American Missionary* and *Reports,* cited in Hennings, *Op. Cit.,* 47–53.

Nebraska Act the *American Missionary* urged every minister to "preach a sermon to his people on the subject of Christian Emigration," and suggested that some should "go with a pastor as a colony to Kansas." Christian anti-slavery missionaries were promptly dispatched to the debated area; two arrived in the latter part of 1854; ten were sent altogether. Amos Finch, the first to appear, had eight regular preaching appointments by January, 1855. "I deal faithfully with slavery at all my appointments," he reported, "and on other occasions when opportunity offers." Samuel L. Adair, a brother-in-law of John Brown, was the second A.M.A. missionary to arrive. He later established himself at Osawatomie and sheltered two of the Brown boys on the night of the massacre, but neither he nor his associates sanctioned the use of force. Kansas, they believed, was to be won by spiritual and not by "deadly" weapons. Adair was never-tiring in the cause, preaching to his various congregations the abolition of slavery along with "emancipation from sin," circulating the *American Missionary*, and sheltering fugitives in "the back kitchen."

Oberlin made its usual contribution. Adair was an Oberlin man. Four of the six anti-slavery missionaries in Kansas supported by the A.M.A in 1856–57 were Oberlin men. One of these was John H. Byrd who commenced preaching at Leavenworth in the summer of 1855 and later moved to Atchison where he organized colored Sunday schools and Bible classes and gained the nickname of "the nigger preacher." Byrd also took a fairly prominent part in Kansas free-soil politics.

The reports of Adair, Finch, Byrd and other agents, published in the *American Missionary*, the *Independent* and elsewhere, made excellent propaganda for dissemination in the East. One Oberlin missionary, Horatio N. Norton, after several months in the field, devoted the winter of 1856–57 to travelling through the free states, lecturing on Kansas and advocating the emigration of free-soilers to the Territory.[21]

The abolitionists of the American Missionary Association never gave up the hope that the men of the South could be won over by moral suasion—by revival methods. As there was considerable anti-slavery sentiment in the border state of Kentucky,

[21]Hennings, *Op. Cit.*, 97–119.

that seemed a logical point at which to start the invasion. From 1848 to 1859, except for two years at the beginning of the Fifties, the A.M.A. maintained one or two *colporteurs* in Kentucky. Most of the work of the A.M.A. in Kentucky centered around Kentucky's native anti-slavery preacher, John G. Fee, who received funds from the association from 1848 on. Fee was entirely in sympathy with the association's point of view, holding that slavery could be destroyed by political action and by "moral suasion" brought to bear in the South. He defined "moral suasion" as "truth quickened by the Spirit of God." He was an army in himself, writing many anti-slavery pamphlets and distributing them, on Sundays preaching powerfully against slaveholding as a sin, and on weekdays lecturing against slavery as a social and economic evil. But Fee did not battle alone, for the association sent to his support at least ten other anti-slavery ministers and teachers, seven of them from Oberlin.

The climax of the Kentucky campaign came in Fee's plan to establish a school at Berea which would, as he put it, "be to Kentucky what Oberlin is to Ohio, Anti-slavery, Anti-caste, Anti-secret societies, Anti-rum, Anti-sin." It was to be, like Oberlin, a manual labor school, located in a Christian colony and supporting reform principles. Fee collaborated with three of the Oberlin missionaries in working out his plan and, in addition, sought the advice of Professor E. H. Fairchild of the Oberlin faculty. The program was finally agreed upon in December, 1858. But the new school's history was interrupted at the end of a year. The hysteria following the Harper's Ferry raid led to the expulsion of Fee and his associates from Kentucky. The A.M.A. raised a relief fund of fifteen hundred dollars for their assistance.[22]

As Oberlin attacked the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions for its noncommittal attitude toward slavery, so it attacked the American Tract Society for its refusal to publish and distribute anti-slavery literature. When, in 1858, the Boston branch of the Tract Society broke away from the main organization on this issue, John W. Alvord, one of the Lane Rebels, became its senior secretary. The Boston society (also called American Tract Society) proceeded to publish a large number of anti-slavery tracts, including a prize essay by Professor

[22]*Ibid.*, 121–147.

Thome on "Prayer for the Oppressed," and became, under Alvord's leadership, another Christian anti-slavery society.[23]

Though the Christian anti-slavery convention movement of the fifties did not start in Oberlin, Oberlin gave it strong support. A Christian Anti-Slavery Convention was held in Cincinnati in 1850 in Mahan's old Vine Street Church (formerly Sixth Presbyterian). George Whipple was made vice-president; a colored student from Oberlin introduced a resolution, and a letter from Professor Henry Cowles expressing his disappointment at his inability to attend was ordered published in the report. At the convention held in Chicago in the following year five men from Oberlin (including Keep, Finney and Cowles), besides former President Mahan and at least six Oberlin graduates, participated. Finney and Mahan are listed among the vice-presidents and George Whipple was one of the secretaries. Mahan and Finney spoke, deploring the impression, which they declared had been made on the minds of the people of Scotland and England, that the American anti-slavery movement was "mainly infidel, with Garrison at its head." Finney particularly emphasized the point that this convention was a "*Christian Anti-Slavery* Convention."[24] The convention at Ravenna, Ohio, on June 18, 1852, was presided over by John Keep. E. H. Fairchild, M. E. Strieby and J. A. Thome played an active part, but the convention seems to have been a less representative one than either of those preceding. The Wellington convention of two years later was pretty much of an Oberlin affair.[25] By this time the movement was losing force. The Kansas question was absorbing most of the attention of anti-slavery men.

In 1859, however, the idea of Christian organization against slavery was revived by a group of clergymen who held a convention at Worcester, Massachusetts, and organized the "Church Anti-Slavery Society." This stimulated the Ohio Christian anti-slavery leaders and a call for an Ohio convention was sent out, signed, among others, by fourteen residents or graduates of Ober-

[23]*Oberlin Evangelist,* June 22 and Aug. 17, 1859; American Tract Society, *Annual Reports,* (Boston); *General Series of Tracts Published by the American Tract Society* (Boston—n.d.) Vol. I; J. M. Alvord, *Address of the Executive Committee of the American Tract Society, Boston, to the Friends of the Society; etc.* 1858.

[24]Christian Anti-Slavery Convention, *Minutes, 1850* (Cincinnati), and *1851* (Chicago).

[25]*Oberlin Evangelist,* June 23, 1852 (Letter of J. A. Thome), and Nov. 22, 1854.

lin. When the convention assembled at Columbus in August, Oberlin men were numerous among the delegates and definitely dominated the proceedings. The session was opened with remarks by Professor Peck and John Keep. Thome presented the report of the Committee on Resolutions. Prof. E. H. Fairchild of Oberlin was chairman of the executive committee. Peck was the outstanding orator as well as the hero of the hour because of his late experience in the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue Case. The convention was definitely a "higher law" convention, insisting that no man-made law was binding if it conflicted with God-made law; it stood for "No communion with slaveholders and no obedience to the Fugitive Slave Law."[26]

After the adjournment, Fairchild, as chairman of the executive committee, announced the appointment of an agent whose duty it was "to lecture in all prominent places in the State where he can obtain a hearing, setting forth the enormous evil and sin of slavery, the delinquencies and obligations of Christians in regard to it, and the prostitution of the various branches of the general government to its support." He also issued a call to "Anti-Slavery Christians of all denominations throughout the Western States and Territories" to meet at Chicago in October. At Chicago, with a broader representation, the principles of the Ohio convention were reiterated.[27] In 1860 came the presidential campaign and the question was left to the statesman and the soldier.

Oberlin and Garrison had nothing in common but their consecration to the freeing of the slave. Garrison was destructive, "ultra," and impractical; Oberlin was, in comparison, constructive, conservative, cautious and practical. Though Garrison was a "perfectionist" there was very little similarity between his brand of that doctrine and Oberlin Perfectionism or "Sanctification." His "come-outerism" was antipathetic to all that Oberlin held dear. He denounced the organized Christian Church and cast it aside as wholly and hopelessly polluted. Oberlin, as we have seen, sought to make the Church into a great anti-slavery society. With government and politics, likewise, he would have nothing to do. "The Constitution," he declared, "is a covenant with death and an agreement with Hell." The Oberlinites said it

[26]Church Anti-Slavery Society, *Proceedings, 1859,* and Ohio State Christian Anti-Slavery Convention, *Proceedings, 1859.*

[27]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Oct. 12, and Nov. 9, 1859.

was a great anti-slavery document which had been misinterpreted by corrupt judges. Garrison was a radical non-resistant (at least, until the Civil War); Oberlin's leaders believed that force was righteous when used for a righteous cause. Garrison favored the complete equality of women with men; Oberlin opposed the general participation of women in public exercises and attempted to keep them "in their place." It is a significant fact that not a single one of the male leaders of the Oberlin community or alumni was a Garrisonian, whereas all of the outstanding women abolitionists educated at Oberlin supported him.[28]

When, in 1840, the national anti-slavery society split, it was over exactly these issues: political action, relations to the church, women's rights, etc. Garrison dominated the group known as the American Anti-Slavery Society. Oberlin and the friends of Oberlin, like the Tappans, supported the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. The conflict between the two factions was, it may be imagined, most heated and generally unedifying. Lewis Tappan wrote to Finney that the Garrisonians were "a stench in the nostrils of the people." "Garrison & his clique," he declared, "have blighted the prospects of the cause."[29] The Ohio Garrisonians cautioned their "friends against contributing to the support of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute," which they declared truly to be the deadly enemy of the American Anti-Slavery Society.[30] They also organized a rival state society—the Ohio American Anti-Slavery Society, which later became the Western Anti-Slavery Society. From 1845 to 1850 they published at New Lisbon the *Anti-Slavery Bugle* as the Western mouthpiece of Garrison and his associates.

Betsey Cowles, Lucy Stone and Sallie Holley were all Garrisonians. Betsey Cowles of Austinburg, who graduated from the Ladies' Course in 1840, was one of the ablest anti-slavery leaders in northern Ohio and an outstanding woman reformer in the West. She was a contributor to the *Bugle* and a close friend of the radical Garrisonian, Abby Kelley Foster. Lucy Stone (A.B.—1847) kept a picture of Garrison on the wall of her room in

[28]I am much indebted to an excellent Honors Thesis written in 1929 by Geraldine Hopkins [Hubbard] entitled "Garrisonian Abolition vs. Oberlin Anti-Slavery." On the general relation of Garrison to the religious anti-slavery group, see G. H. Barnes, *Antislavery Impulse* (N. Y.—1933), *passim*.

[29]Lewis Tappan to C. G. Finney, Dec. 24, 1843 (Tappan Letter Books) .

[30]Quotation from the *Anti-Slavery Bugle* in the *Elyria Courier,* Aug. 6, 1850.

Ladies' Hall; she almost worshipped him. For a while she was the only subscriber to the *Liberator* in Oberlin; she was the Oberlin agent of the *Anti-Slavery Bugle*. Sallie Holley was a daughter of Myron Holley and a graduate of the Ladies' Course in 1852. Her attendance was made possible by the assistance of Samuel D. Porter, the abolitionist trustee from Rochester. In the fifties both Lucy Stone and Sallie Holley were accredited lecturers for the American Anti-Slavery Society, along with Samuel J. May, the Fosters, C. C. Burleigh, Parker Pillsbury and other radicals. Both developed considerable reputations as speakers. Abby Foster called Sallie "far the most eloquent woman that has ever blessed our anti-slavery platform."[31] Some of the coolness which existed for so long between the Oberlin leaders and the most prominent of the early women graduates is explained by this alignment.[32]

In 1846 and 1847 the radicals invaded Oberlin but without making any save unfavorable impressions. Stephen S. Foster and Abby Kelley Foster constituted the attacking party in 1846. They came in February with the recommendation of Betsey Cowles, who begged her Oberlin friends to extend to them "Christian forbearance & hospitality." The time of their visit, however, was most inopportune as a revival was under way, and naturally the leaders disliked having the interest of students and other prospective converts diverted. Nevertheless, three meetings were held in which the "come-outerism twins" presented their radical views, denouncing the Church and political action. The appearance of a woman as a public speaker was objected to on principle. Most listeners were unfavorably affected, concluded that Mrs. Foster was vulgar and shameless and that they had no constructive program to offer. Only Lucy Stone had a good word for them. She "had a grand time with them. They lectured three times. Set the people to thinking, and I hope great good will result."[33]

[31] *Anti-Slavery Bugle, passim;* J. W. Chadwick, *A Life for Liberty, Anti-Slavery and Other Letters of Sallie Holley* (New York—1899), Chapters IV–VI; American Anti-Slavery Society, *Annual Report,* 1855 (New York—1855), 108–109; A. S. Blackwell, *Lucy Stone,* 48, 49 and 59; and Abby Kelley Foster to Gerrit Smith, Jan. 1, 1852 (Gerrit Smith MSS).

[32] Finney suspected Lucy Stone and Antoinette Brown of atheism, or something very near it. Finney to John Keep, Feb. 14, 1853 (Keep MSS).

[33] Betsey Cowles to Henry Cowles, Feb. 14, 1846 (Cowles MSS); a composition written by Helen M. Cowles, Mar. 3, 1846 (Cowles-Little MSS); Betsey B. Hudson

The Fosters were not satisfied either and, in June, wrote to Oberlin asking another hearing at a time when no religious meetings were in progress. The faculty declared their opinion that the Fosters were "unsafe advocates of the slave" and resolved that it was "undesirable and unadvisable for them to come." Mrs. Foster wrote caustically to Lucy Stone in regard to this decision: "It is 'undesirable and inadvisable' forsooth, for us to come to them,—and all because we are infidels. And so it is not advisable and desirable that they should meet us face to face and counsel us; or, failing to do that, expose us. No! no!! . . . It is desirable to attack us in our absence, and send the cry 'Infidel' on our heels, all over the country, but give us no opportunity to refute the vile slanders. I tell you, Lucy, these men know their position in Church and in State is the most corrupt and damning infidelity, and therefore they don't dare to meet us before the people for an investigation." "Such people," she declared, "would be beneath contempt were it not that they have souls to save, and that they are doing so much mischief."[34]

Public opinion in Oberlin was aroused to a fever pitch all summer long over the question of whether the Fosters should appear or not. A group among the students and Negroes was anxious to have them come; Finney and most of the faculty opposed it. All sorts of rumors circulated with regard to Mr. and Mrs. Foster who were, it was said, referred to as "low, degraded, licentious vagabonds" and "infidels, of the blackest dye." It was even whispered that Mrs. Foster was going to have a baby and that her appearance on the public platform would be indecent. The Fosters announced that they were coming anyway, and it was finally determined that, though they might not defile the meeting house, they could speak in the old chapel in Colonial Hall if members of the Oberlin faculty were allowed time for reply from the same platform.

The discussion was begun on a Tuesday evening early in Sep-

to Betsey Cowles, Feb. 27, 1846, and T. B. Hudson to Betsey Cowles, Mar. 5, 1846 (lent by Myra Cowles of Austinburg, Ohio), *Oberlin Evangelist,* Mar. 4, 1846, and A. S. Blackwell, *Lucy Stone,* 63.

[34]There is material on the Fosters' visit to Oberlin in the *Anti-Slavery Bugle,* Oct. 9, 1846; Abby K. Foster to Lucy Stone, Aug. 15, [1846] (lent by Alice Stone Blackwell of Boston); Oberlin Musical Association, MS Minutes, Sept. 12, 1846; and *Oberlin Evangelist,* Sept. 30, 1846. Alice Welch Cowles met Abby Kelley in 1840 and found her well-intentioned and sincere, though abusive and somewhat ill-mannered.—A. W. Cowles to Henry Cowles, July 19, 1840 (Cowles-Little MSS).

tember and lasted through Friday evening, most of the time being taken up in a twelve-hour debate between Mr. Foster and President Mahan on "come-outerism." It must have been a rather exciting affair, as personalities were freely indulged in on both sides. The Fosters were past masters in the art of public, oral abuse, and Mahan was no amateur at recrimination. Even the Musical Association adjourned "to accommodate the discussion then in progress . . . on disunion in church and state organizations." President Mahan impugned the sincerity of his opponents, and Foster returned the compliment. The *Bugle* said that Mahan described come-outerism as a hideous monster "the size of a *four bushel basket*" with many great claws "each armed with hellish daggers." The results of such a discussion could be only increased bitterness. "The discussion is now over," wrote the editor of the *Evangelist*. "We are not aware that disunion and come-out-ism have made one new convert. Every body here knows that the current of public opinion sets more powerfully against those views now than it did before the discussion, and that the Fosters were deemed weak in argument—strong only in vituperation."

In 1847 Garrison entered Ohio in person accompanied by Frederick Douglass, Stephen Foster, J. W. Walker, and Samuel Brooke, the "indefatigable General Agent of the Western Anti-Slavery Society." They arrived in Oberlin at Commencement in time to hear two of the graduates "denounce 'the fanaticism of Come-outerism and Disunionism,' and . . . make a thrust at those who, in the guise of anti-slavery, temperance, etc., are endeavoring to promote 'infidelity'!" They might have had a partisan on the program, but Lucy Stone would not write an essay because the faculty objected to ladies reading their own pieces.

The debate on "come-outerism" occupied the two following days. Garrison wrote from Oberlin to his wife:

"Yesterday, at 10 o'clock, we began our meetings in the church —nearly three thousand persons in attendance. Another was held in the afternoon, another in the evening—and this forenoon we have had another long session. Douglass and myself have done nearly all the talking, on our side, friend Foster saying but little. [Perhaps he had used all his ammunition the previous year.] The principal topics of discussion have been Come-outerism from the Church and the State. Pres. Mahan entered into the

debate in favor of the U. S. Constitution as an anti-slavery instrument, and, consequently, of the Liberty Party. He was perfectly respectful, and submitted to our interrogations with good temper and courtesy. As a disputant, he is adroit and plausible, but neither vigorous nor profound. . . . What impression we made at Oberlin, I cannot say; but I was abundantly satisfied as to the apparent effect."[35]

Garrison was over-optimistic. In a letter written a few days later a member of the audience declared that "the reply of Prest. Mahan was masterly and dignified, overturning and scattering to the winds every position of his opponent."[36] Evidently each side retreated from the field assured of its victory.

Garrison was pleasantly entertained by Hamilton Hill and Professor Timothy Hudson. He enjoyed meeting his admirer, Lucy Stone, "a very superior young woman" with "a soul as free as air." This visit was characterized by none of the personal rancor which marred the appearances of the Fosters in 1846. Professor Morgan was charmed by Garrison's personality, and found his manners so pleasing that he no longer wondered, as he wrote to Mark Hopkins, "at his influence over those who approach him with sympathy for his sentiments." He regarded Douglass as "one of the greatest phenomena of the age" and found him "full of wit, human[ity] and pathos and sometimes mighty in invective," but he was sorry to find him so much "under the influence of the Garrison clique."[37] But there is no more evidence of any conversions on either side in 1847 than in 1846.

Garrison's doctrine could have found full expression only in revolution. Oberlinites denied the necessity of such extreme measures, preferring to carry on their campaign for the slave through the regular channels of ecclesiastical and civil organizations. Garrison had no faith in human institutions as constituted, because slavery existed under them, but Oberlin maintained its practical belief in democracy in Church and State.

[35]Garrison to wife, Aug. 28, 1847, W. P. Garrison, *William Lloyd Garrison* (New York—1899), III, 202–204.

[36]"D. McB." in the *Cleveland True Democrat,* Sept. 3, 1847, quoted by Ellsworth, *Op. Cit.,* 121 n.

[37]John Morgan to Mark Hopkins, Dec. 15, 1847 (Morgan-Hopkins MSS).

## CHAPTER XX

# *THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST WAR*

IN THE perfect society war must cease, swords be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks. Instead of an army of soldiers equipped with musket and bayonet let the youth of the nation join with those of other nations, form one great brigade of workers, preaching and praying for every good cause, living in close touch with the earth, ready at any time to pick up the axe and the hoe when leaving the pulpit or the desk. Slavery must cease; there must be a reformation in morals; physical laws must be obeyed; the heathen everywhere must be converted and war must be made impossible.

The organized peace crusade in America began early in the century.[1] The first peace societies were formed in New York and Massachusetts in 1815. It was not, however, until thirteen years later that the work of local organization was integrated in the American Peace Society by the first great leader of the cause, William Ladd. Relations between English and American pacifists were close all along, the Society for the Promotion of Permanent and Universal Peace having been founded in London in 1816 partly as a result of influences emanating from America. Zealots for the cause always claimed that the societies played a large part in smoothing over the serious diplomatic difficulties which arose between the United States and Great Britain from 1837 to 1846. Certainly those difficulties stimulated the interest in organized peace activities. It was in this period that the peace movement took root in Oberlin.

In Oberlin as elsewhere there were two schools of pacifists: the radicals and the conservatives. The radicals were followers of Henry C. Wright, Adin Ballou and William Lloyd Garrison,

[1]For a general survey of the peace movement before the Civil War see Merle E. Curti. *The American Peace Crusade, 1815–1860* (Durham, N. C.—1929). This is an excellent introduction, despite the implication (on page 31) that Oberlin had a peace society before 1828—five years before the founding!

who believed that all use of force was wrong and had organized, in 1838, the New England Non-Resistance Society. The conservatives sided with President Allen of Bowdoin, who believed that war and the use of force generally might be justifiable in certain circumstances, especially in self-defense.

The radicals were the first in the field. On June 18, 1840, they formed the Oberlin Non-Resistance Society, and declared their belief "that all wars are anti-christian—that governments sustained by force, and acting upon the principles of retaliation, must be left to other hands than the disciples of Jesus—that the weapons of the christian's warfare are not carnal, but spiritual . . . that parental authority is the only human authority, approved by God; and that christians are to render allegiance only to God, not to man—hence we may not employ violence in restraining sin or promoting holiness among men; nor take any part in military services; nor assist in the execution of penal enactments; but bear all things for Christ's sake, boldly testifying against all strife and sin, wherever they may be found."[2] It is clear enough that Oberlin was profoundly moved by the formation of this society. As early as April of 1840 the Dialectic Association discussed the question: "Would it be our duty, should there be a levy, to take up arms in the anticipated struggle with Great Briton?" On September 23, 1840, the question for debate was "Is Capital punishment ever consistent with the principles of benevolence?" and, a week later, "Do the interests of our country demand the proposed standing army?" In the following spring the issue was faced squarely in a meeting of the same society: "Are the principles of the New England Non-Resistance Soc. consistent with the Bible?"[3]

Students were active in the Oberlin Non-Resistance Society (the vice-president, secretary and treasurer were all students), but no members of the faculty allowed themselves to become associated with it in any way. The faculty, indeed, seems to have denounced the organization as anarchistic and too closely identified with the "come-outerism" and anti-Sabbatarianism of William Lloyd Garrison and the Fosters. The leaders of the

[2]*Constitution of the Oberlin Non-Resistance Society, formed June 18th, 1840* (n.d.—n.p.).

[3]Dialectic Association, MS Minutes, Apr. 15, Sept. 23 and 30, 1840, and May 12, 1841. The presence of David Cambell in Oberlin may have been a factor in this movement. See below pages 323–325.

society denied the charge and insisted that they were only attempting to put the true religion of Jesus Christ into practice. Most Christians, they declared, were compromising with the Devil in admitting the righteousness of any form of war or the use of force. "How long," they asked, "shall earth continue one vast . . . slaughter-house of brethren; while the *followers* of the Prince of Peace calmly look on, smile, and assist in the bloody ravages therein continually perpetrated? Is it not our duty to cry aloud and spare not? Has not the time come for us to cleanse our skirts from the guilt of blood, and to *speak out*, till the fatal enginery of war and strife are laid aside? till peace is proclaimed throughout all the earth, and good-will spreads to every family of man? till the millenial glory shall break in upon the earth, and Jehovah shall reign King of Kings, and all the kingdoms of this world have become the Kingdoms of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, whose dominion shall be without end?"[4]

Though the conservatives, supported as they were by the united faculty, were far stonger and more numerous, not until 1843 did they organize a society. The Oberlin Peace Society, founded in that year, unlike the Oberlin Non-Resistance Society, had the official approval of the Institute. The immediate impetus which brought about its organization seems to have been the coming of Amasa Walker to Oberlin as Professor of Political Economy. Professor Walker had been a member of the old Massachusetts Peace Society before the formation of the American Peace Society and continued to be one of the outstanding American leaders of the peace movement.

The faculty and colonists (there were undoubtedly some students present, though they did not take an active part) met in the chapel on March 21, 1843, for the purpose of forming a peace society. The meeting was called to order by Hamilton Hill, the British Secretary and Treasurer of the Institute, and Amasa Walker was chosen chairman. The task of drawing up a constitution was referred to a committee made up of Henry Cowles, William Dawes (the financial agent), Amasa Walker, David Cambell (the Grahamite, formerly in charge of the boarding hall, who had twice been in a Boston jail for refusing to serve in the militia[5]), and H. C. Taylor (the editor of the *Oberlin Evange-*

[4]*Constitution of the Oberlin Non-Resistance Society, etc.*, 15.
[5]W. P. Garrison, *William Lloyd Garrison*, II, 223n.

*list*). Adjourned meetings on the 25th and 29th discussed this constitution, which was adopted on the latter occasion. Some officers of the former Non-Resistance Society were members of the new organization; Deacon H. A. Pease, who had been on the executive committee of that society, was one of the vice-presidents of the new association. It is not surprising that the constitution should have shown their influence and it is more than probable that the three meetings required for the adoption of that document were made necessary by differences regarding the question of defensive war. In the constitution, as finally approved, the principle of non-resistance is stated but, at the same time, the necessity of defensive war is recognized. This broad platform, like that of the American Peace Society, made it possible for both radicals and conservatives to remain in the same organization but constituted, by and large, a victory for the conservatives. The society at its meeting on March 29 adopted resolutions in favor of an active peace propaganda and a congress of nations, and expressed optimism because of "the long peace" in Europe and the "happy adjustment of the late difficulties . . . between the United States and Great Britain."[6]

On Monday, April 8, 1843, the managers of the society posted a

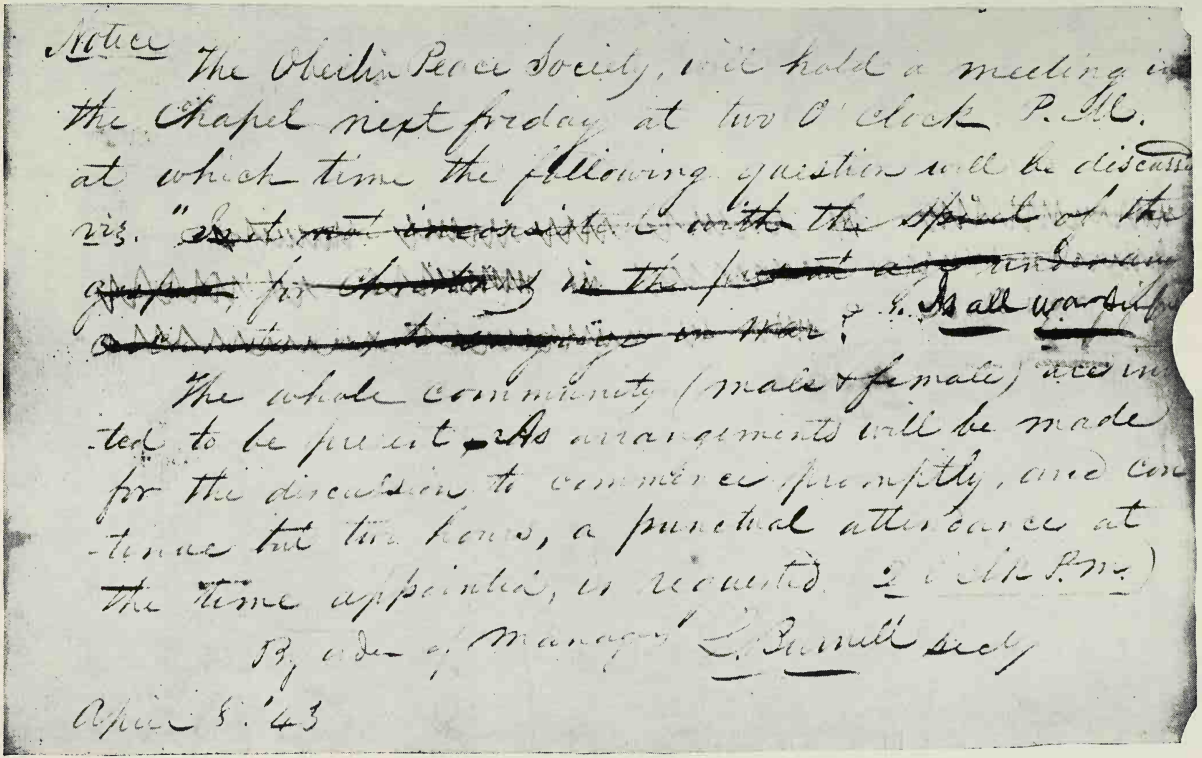
NOTICE

> The Oberlin Peace Society, will hold a meeting in the Chapel next friday at two o'clock P.M. at which time the following question will be discussed, viz: *"Is all war sinful?"*
>
> The whole community (male & female) are invited to be present. As arrangements will be made for the discussion to commence promptly and continue but two hours, a punctual attendance at the time appointed, is requested (*2 O'clk P. M.*)
>
> By order of Managers
> L. Burnell, Secy.[7]

If the "managers" ever thought that any such question could be debated to a conclusion in two hours in Oberlin they showed a

[6]MSS of the Oberlin Peace Society in the Misc. Archives of Oberlin College, and the *Oberlin Evangelist,* May 10, 1843.

[7]MSS of the Oberlin Peace Society (Misc. Archives). See opposite page.



Notice The Oberlin Peace Society, will hold a meeting in the Chapel next friday at two O'clock P.M. at which time the following question will be discussed viz. "~~Is it not inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel for christians in the present age under any circumstances to engage in war~~? Is all war sinful?

The whole community (male & female) are invited to be present. As arrangements will be made for the discussion to commence promptly, and continue but two hours, a punctual attendance at the time appointed, is requested. 2 O'clk P.M.)

By order of Manager L. Burnell sec'y

April 8. '43

CALL FOR A MEETING OF THE OBERLIN PEACE SOCIETY
(From the original in the Miscellaneous Archives)

surprising lack of insight. The faculty, under the lead of Professor Finney, took the position that all war was not necessarily sinful, but the opposition must have been pretty stiff, for adjourned meetings were still being held well into May. "The discussions lasted for several weeks," wrote a young lady student in the Collegiate Department. "They were the most interesting I ever attended. Prof. Finney says that selfishness & that alone is sin. Then all war if it is sin must be selfish, which he thinks cannot be proved."[8] As usual when Finney entered the arena he carried all before him. Oberlin was arrayed, from this time, on the conservative side. Two years later Lucy Stone was immensely disappointed to hear Professor Cowles and Professor Morgan taking the stand that war might sometimes be right.[9]

The Oberlin Peace Society had, also, at one of its early meetings in 1843, appointed delegates to attend the World's Peace Convention: William Dawes, Hamilton Hill, H. C. Taylor and Amasa Walker. When this first "international congress of peace advocates" in all history met at Freemason's Tavern in London on June 28, 1843, Amasa Walker was present as a delegate from the Oberlin Peace Society. The other Oberlin delegates, unable to attend themselves, despatched an address to the convention. "We should be glad," they declared, "to meet with you personally in this Holy Convocation. But [as] we cannot, permit us to say 'Peace be with you all'. . . . In your worlds convention we confidently look for this enlarged spirit of Philanthropy, which shall make us all feel that our field is the world, and all mankind are our countrymen."[10] Fourteen delegates from the United States took part in the proceedings, including, besides Walker, Lewis Tappan, John Tappan and George C. Beckwith of the American Peace Society. Among the British delegates were Joseph Sturge, the Quaker philanthropist, and Richard Cobden. The leader of the French delegation was the Duc de la Rochefoucauld—Liancourt, president of the Society of Christian Morals. It was assumed by the committee of arrangements that war was "incon-

[8]Jane B. Trew to Andrew Trew, May 29, 1843 (lent by Miss Mary Ewalt, Lakewood, Ohio).

[9]A. S. Blackwell, *Lucy Stone*, 55.

[10]A copy of the address dated May, 1844 (1843), and signed by Dawes, Hill and Taylor is in the Miscellaneous Archives. It was also printed in *The Proceedings of the First General Peace Convention: Held in London, June 22, 1843, and the Two Following Days*, etc., etc. (London—1843), 40.

sistent with the spirit of Christianity and the interests of mankind." The convention adopted resolutions favoring the government control of the sale of munitions, a congress of nations and arbitration treaties, and condemning the Opium War. Professor Walker, a vice-president of the convention, introduced a resolution calling upon women to exert their influence against war,—to "frown on the warrior and the duellist, . . . the epaulettes, and the plumes."[11] An "Address to the Civilized Governments of the World" was prepared and presented to the heads of more than fifty governments, among others to Sir Robert Peel, King Louis Philippe and President Tyler. It was believed by the friends of peace that the convention furnished most effective publicity for the cause.[12]

Though the Oberlin Peace Society seems to have died an early death, the peace cause continued to be actively agitated in the middle forties. Even the Oberlin Agricultural and Horticultural Society was invaded. In 1844 Professor Fairchild delivered the annual address before that body on the subject, "The Cost of War."[13] Five years later Hiram Pease exhibited at the agricultural fair "an old sword elegantly converted into a *bread knife,* with the motto on its trenchant blade, 'Thou shalt not kill,' also an old bayonet transformed into a 'corn-cutter.' "[14] The *Oberlin Evangelist* regularly admitted peace propaganda to its columns, and declared editorially that one of its objects was "to hasten the day when men . . . shall learn war no more." Among other means of bringing about peace it favored a congress of nations.[15] In 1845 and 1846, George Sturge, the English Quaker and brother of Joseph Sturge, offered a prize of $25.00 for the best essay written in Oberlin answering the article of the Episcopal Church of England, which says, "It is lawful for a christian to fight at the command of the civil magistrate."[16] In March of 1847 a Lorain County Peace Society was formed at a meeting in the Court House at Elyria. The object of the society was declared to be *"to disseminate truth respecting the evils of War, and the*

[11] *Proceedings,* 32.
[12] Curti, *Op. Cit.,* 136–142.
[13] *Oberlin Evangelist,* Nov. 20, 1844.
[14] *Ohio Cultivator,* Oct 15, 1849.
[15] *Oberlin Evangelist,* Aug. 14, 1844.
[16] Amasa Walker to William Dawes, Mar. 29, 1846 (Treas. Off., File Q), and P. C. M., Apr. 6, 1846.

*best means of its abolition."* William Dawes was elected president and Dr. N. S. Townshend, the Oberlin trustee and founder of the agricultural college in Oberlin, was chosen secretary—evidence, of course, of the Oberlin origin of the society. In June of the same year Henry Cowles declared editorially in the *Oberlin Evangelist:* ". . . We believe that all international wars may be easily avoided."[17]

The Oregon question and the Mexican War furnished very practical issues for the peace advocates to face.[18] The *Oberlin Evangelist* criticized Polk for demanding the whole of Oregon and for the "confident not to say insulting air and tone with which our administration put forward their claims." Why did we want Oregon anyway?

"What! are we out of land that we should be in such hot haste to grasp another empire two or three thousand miles West of the Mississippi? Does any sane man believe that when Oregon shall all be peopled, it will form an integral part of this United Republic? or that it is at all desirable it should?

"Besides, and more than all, have we counted the cost of war with Great Britain? Have our rulers considered who shall bear the responsibility for . . . the blood that will be shed—the hellish passions that will be inflamed—the horrid demoralization that must result—the commerce crippled—the sinews of prosperity cut—the treasure squandered—the debts incurred . . . —have they—our rulers and the mad clamorers for war—begun to estimate these evils and ask themselves who will bear the responsibilities of having incurred them?"[19]

Oberlin's opposition to the Mexican War may be partially explained on anti-slavery grounds, but, of course, there was never any danger of Oregon becoming a slave state. As to the Mexican War, Oberlin denounced it in no uncertain terms as soon as Taylor had crossed the Nueces. "Who can justify such a war as this?" asked the editor of the *Evangelist.* "We have no fellowship with wrong doing—done by our own country, or by anybody else's country under heaven. Wars of aggression like this we not only deprecate and deplore, but most unqualifiedly condemn. The conscience of the world and the court of heaven are against us,

[17]*Elyria Courier,* Apr. 6, 1847; *Oberlin Evangelist,* June 9, 1847.
[18]Curti, *Op. Cit.,* 103–131, and Christina Phelps, *The Anglo-American Peace Movement* (New York—1930), 85–86.
[19]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Dec. 3, 1845.

and we should not be disappointed if bitter woes betide our nation for it, to befall us ere all is over."[20] On the very day of the publication of this editorial the people of Oberlin, gathered in mass meeting, adopted a set of denunciatory resolutions declaring that, "The government of the United States, by an unconstitutional and outrageously unjust annexation of Texas, and by a menacing and insulting display of an armed force on Mexican territory and before a Mexican City, has plunged the country into a war in which the God of justice and the common sentiment of the world are against us, and in which every blow struck on the part of this nation will be an act of robbery and murder."[21] Nor was any retreat made from this position. A year later the *Evangelist* called the conflict "most dishonorable, unjust, and nefarious . . . conceived in sin."[22] When the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo was signed there was no celebration in Oberlin. "'A dreadful sound is in the ear' of the nation," declared the editor, "for it has done a damning deed. . . . We do not ourselves think that bonfires, and illuminations, and thanksgivings, and congratulations become us in the present crisis; but rather confession, humiliation, sackcloth and ashes."[23]

The later history of the peace crusade in Oberlin is bound up with the story of one of the greatest leaders of that movement, Elihu Burritt, the "learned Blacksmith." His sweet, Christian spirit, associated as it was with an invincible attachment to reform principles, appealed strongly to the rank and file at Oberlin.[24] It was in 1844 that Burritt began the publication of his *Christian Citizen* at Worcester, Massachusetts. In the heading of each number was a cut showing a lion and a lamb lying down together and the motto: "God hath made of one blood all the nations of men." Already in the summer of 1845 he had become well-known in Oberlin. In July the Dialectic Association laid a tax of one dollar on each member for his benefit.[25] The literary societies joined in inviting him to be their speaker at Commence-

[20] *Oberlin Evangelist,* May 27, 1846.
[21] *Ibid.,* June 10, 1846.
[22] *Ibid.,* June 9, 1847.
[23] *Ibid.,* June 22, 1848. *Cf.* C. S. Ellsworth, "The American Churches and the Mexican War," *American Historical Review,* XLV, 301–326 (Jan., 1940).
[24] On Burritt see Curti, *Op. Cit.,* 143–165, and the biography in the *D. A. B.* by the same author. There is an interesting sketch in the *Cleveland Daily Plain Dealer,* May 7, 1850.
[25] Dialectic Association, MS Minutes, July 22, 1845.

ment. He was forced to decline on account of ill health, but expressed great disappointment especially at thus being deprived of an opportunity of meeting "my dear friend Prof. Walker, whose heart beats true and strong to the cause of humanity."[26] Not until 1854 did Burritt visit Oberlin, when he spoke in favor of "Ocean Penny Postage."[27] In September of 1845 the *Evangelist* published one of his propaganda letters, "Facts for a Thousand Millions," in which he presented an estimate of total mortality in all wars: "Loss of life in the Jewish Wars, 25,000,000—By Wars in the time of Sesostris, 15,000,000 . . . etc. American Indians destroyed by the Spaniards, 12,000,000—Wars of Napoleon, 6,000,000"—reaching a total of 683,000,000 killed in all wars! The dead if placed in a row, he declared "would reach 442 times around the earth, and four times around the sun" or if lumped in a great mass (in a figure much like one of Van Loon's) "would form a globe of human flesh of nearly a mile in diameter, weighing 1,820,000,000,000 lbs!"[28]

Borrowing from the methods of the temperance reformers Burritt drew up a pledge to be signed by opponents of war all over the world:

> Believing all war to be inconsistent with the spirit of Christianity, and destructive to the best interest of mankind, I do hereby pledge myself never to enlist or enter into any army or navy or to yield any voluntary support or sanction to . . . any war, by whomsoever, for whatsoever proposed, declared, or waged. And I do hereby associate myself with all persons, of whatever country, colour, condition, or who have signed, or who shall hereafter sign, this pledge, in a 'League of Universal Brotherhood'; whose object shall be to employ all legitimate and moral means for the abolition of all war, and . . . the abolition of all institutions and customs which do not recognize and respect the image of God and a human brother in every man of whatever clime, color or condition of humanity.

The idea came to him while on a tour in England and the first signers of the pledge were secured in England in the summer of

[26]Burritt's reply in the *Oberlin Evangelist,* Aug. 14, 1845.
[27]*Oberlin Evangelist,* July 5, 1854.
[28]*Ibid.,* Sept. 24, 1845.

1846. Before the year was out Professor Walker, at the request of Burritt, was moving to secure signers in Oberlin.[29] Of course, the pledge was very close to a non-resistant document, and most of the Oberlin leaders gave it the cold shoulder, but the students and colonists signed gladly, and in September of 1847 Amos Dresser could report over seven hundred pledges for Oberlin.[30]

Amos Dresser was one of the most active and radical peace advocates in Oberlin. He had studied at the Oneida Institute and at Lane Seminary, and came to Oberlin in 1835 as one of the Rebels. He finished the Theological Course in 1839, but even before this had made a reputation as a temperance lecturer and a martyr to the cause of anti-slavery. For a while he was a missionary in Jamaica. He returned on account of ill health and was for a while connected with Shipherd's new institute at Olivet. Dresser was a friend of H. C. Wright of the New England Non-Resistance Society and was himself a thorough non-resistant.[31] His *Bible against War*, published at Oberlin in 1849, was a denunciation of defensive war and an attempt to show that non-resistance was the true Christian doctrine—"a searching analysis of the Bible arguments so often quoted as testimony in favor of war, and a triumphant vindication of the principle that 'all war is inconsistent with Christianity.' "[32] It was intended as a direct answer to President Mahan, who declared that the Old Testament expressly sanctioned the right of self-defense,[33] and to Professor Finney, who declared that "there can be no reasonable doubt" that "war has been in some instances demanded by the

[29]Amasa Walker to H. Hill, Dec. 6, 1846 (Treas. Off., File Q).

[30]Burritt's *Bond of Brotherhood* (Sept. 1847) quoted in Devere Allen, *The Fight for Peace* (New York—1931), 427. Oberlin continued to take a conservative position in general. On June 9, 1847, Henry Cowles, editor of the *Evangelist* expressed the orthodox view editorially:

"As to the morality of the sword, we go just as far as Paul does in Rom. 13, and no farther. God has put it into the hands of the civil magistrate as a 'terror to evil works,' making him a 'revenger to execute wrath on him that doeth evil.' This is all. Just so far as the sword may become indispensable to protect community and maintain good order, so far we have God's authority for using it; and, in our view, no farther."

At this very time Dresser was collecting signatures to the pledge.

[31]Amasa Walker, *Memoir of Rev. Amos Dresser* (n.d.) and Allen, *Op. Cit.*, 427.

[32]Review in *Burritt's Christian Citizen* (Worcester, Massachusetts), July 28, 1849. The review continues: "We think Brother Dresser has done good service to the cause of Peace by the preparation of this volume, and believing that its arguments will reach and affect a class of minds which no other volume that we know of will reach and affect, we cordially commend it to the attention of our readers."

[33]Amos Dresser, *The Bible Against War* (Oberlin—1849), 194–195.

AMOS DRESSER
Oberlin's Outstanding Worker for Peace
(From an engraving in Amasa Walker, *Memoir of Rev. Amos Dresser*)

spirit of moral law."[34] He early became associated with Burritt as western agent for the *Christian Citizen* and as agent for the League of Universal Brotherhood in northern Ohio. His headquarters were at Oberlin where he carried on a cobbler's shop in order to pay his expenses.[35] He was Oberlin's leading radical in the peace movement.

The most spectacular organized demonstrations against war in the nineteenth century were the international peace conventions of 1848 to 1851. We have already noted the World's Peace Convention of 1843 which was held in London. After that initial experiment no more were held until Burritt took up the idea in 1848. As his League of Universal Brotherhood included signers in England, America, France, Holland and other countries it was natural that it should sponsor international gatherings which would bring these members together and help to break down national antipathies and smooth over misunderstandings. The first convention under Burritt's sponsorship was held in Brussels in September, 1848.[36]

Burritt now bent every effort toward a greater congress to meet in the following year in Paris. He secured the cooperation of the London Peace Society in England; and in the United States a special Congress Committee, with members from the American Peace Society as well as from the League of Universal Brotherhood, was formed, with Bradford Sumner of Boston at its head and Charles Sumner a member. Through the columns of the *Christian Citizen* Burritt begged his countrymen to send a large delegation, thus making the congress a truly international and worth-while affair. Special meetings to stir up interest were held all over the country. On May 30, 1849 "the friends of peace" in Oberlin assembled to consider what they could do. Professor Morgan presided; Henry Cowles and Hamilton Hill acted as secretaries. Resolutions were passed expressing approval "of the approaching meeting to be held in Paris" and commending "the course of Elihu Burritt, and his associates, in laboring to estab-

[34] *Ibid.*, V–VI.

[35] Devere Allen, *The Fight for Peace* (New York—1931).

[36] On these congresses see Curti, *Op. Cit.*, 166–188; Christina Phelps, *Op. Cit.*, 52–62; Charles S. Miall; *Henry Richard* (London—1889), 32–99; reports in *Burritt's Christian Citizen; Reports of the Peace Congresses at Brussels, Paris, Frankfort, London, and Edinburgh, in the years 1848, 1849, 1850, 1851 and 1853* (London—1861), and Gavin B. Henderson, "The Pacifists of the Fifties," *Journal of Modern History*, IX, 314–341 (Sept., 1937).

lish a COURT OF ARBITRATION for the settlement of all [inter]national disputes." Four delegates were appointed "to represent the male department of the Institution," including T. B. Hudson, James Monroe and J. D. Cox. Two were chosen to represent "the female department," one of them being Sallie Holley. "To represent this meeting generally" eight others were designated, among them being President Mahan, Professor Finney, William Dawes, John Keep, Amos Dresser and Hamilton Hill.[37] Peace interest had reached such a high point at this time that a special periodical, called the *Oberlin Peace Banner* or *Western Peace Banner* was issued. Though no single copy is known to have survived to the present day it seems to have been published for about a year, from June, 1849, to June, 1850.[38] The Oberlin "friends of peace" provided that the minutes of their meeting should be printed in the *Banner* as well as in the *Evangelist.*

Of all the delegates thus selected only two, Mahan and Hill, actually made the trip to Paris. Hamilton Hill was also chosen as delegate by a gathering of the friends of peace in Elyria, presided over by his predecessor as Secretary of the Institute, Levi Burnell.[39] Besides, his health seemed to demand a rest and he was anxious to see his friends in England. The empty treasury of the Institute was left in the hands of a clerk lent by J. M. Fitch.[40] On July 18, 1849, President Mahan and Treasurer Hill sailed from Boston on board the *Canada* in company with "Mr. Wm. W. Brown, the eloquent fugitive slave," another delegate.[41]

The Peace Congress at Paris was a dramatic event. War and rumors of war were all about; Paris itself was apparently on the verge of a new revolution, but in the splendid Salle de Ste-Cécile, a spacious concert hall in the heart of the city, the friends of peace gathered from both sides of the Atlantic. The auditorium was hung with the flags of all nations. On the platform sat the more distinguished members: in the centre Victor Hugo, chair-

[37] *Oberlin Evangelist,* June 6, 1849.

[38] Notices of the *Banner* in the *Oberlin Evangelist,* July 3, 1850, and Feb. 26, 1851. Reference also in report of meeting referred to.

[39] *Burritt's Christian Citizen,* July 7, 1849.

[40] H. Hill to the Trustees, June 25, 1849 (Misc. Archives), and T. M., Aug. 21, 1849.

[41] *Christian Citizen,* July 21, 1849. See Brown's account in the *Liberator,* Nov. 2, 1849, quoted in C. G. Woodson, *The Mind of the Negro as Reflected in Letters Written During the Crisis, 1800–1860* (Washington-c. 1926), 355–359.

man of the convention, "the fashionable author, the historian and artist of the salons, the poet of the tribunes"; at his right the Abbé Deguerry of the Madeleine, a Roman Catholic Priest; and, next to him, Richard Cobden, distinguished British liberal leader, "cool, composed, and matter of fact"; then M. Visschers of Brussels, and Joseph Sturge the English Quaker. On the chairman's left were M. Coquerel, a French protestant clergyman, "a large man, somewhat approaching corpulency, with his ample black coat buttoned across his chest, a red ribband of the legion of honor in one of his buttonholes, and a double eye-glass dangling at his breast"; then Professor Walker, a member of the legislature of Massachusetts and still nominally on the faculty of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute; and next to him M. Girardin of the Parisian newspaper, *La Presse,* "his whole person and countenance . . . expressive of bold independent individuality, and indomitable courage and energy."[42] Burritt, who did not sit on the platform, was given a great tribute of applause by the 1500 delegates and guests present at the opening session. Twenty-one delegates were in attendance from the United States—three of them (if Walker is included) associated with Oberlin.

Victor Hugo opened the session with an impassioned oration, in which he prophesied that a day would come "when those two immense groups, the United States of America and the United States of Europe, shall be seen placed in the presence of each other, extending the hand of fellowship across the ocean, exchanging their produce, their commerce, their industry, their arts, their genius, clearing the earth, peopling the deserts, improving creation under the eye of the Creator, and uniting, for the good of all, their two irresistible and infinite powers, the fraternity of men and the power of God."[43] Among other speakers on the first day of the Congress were M. Visschers, Mr. Cobden and President Mahan. President Mahan favored a permanent arbitration congress like the later Hague Tribunal, but Mr. Cobden believed it was better to appoint a special board of arbitration whenever a difficulty arose.[44] In general the convention stuck to generalities, avoiding anything which might lead to dis-

[42]J. B. Syme, "Scenes and Characters at the Peace Congress in Paris" in the *Christian Citizen,* Nov. 10 and 17, 1849.

[43]Curti, *Op. Cit.,* 174–175.

[44]*Reports of the Peace Congresses,* 1849, pages 29–32, and the *Christian Citizen,* Sept. 22, 1849.

cord—so much so that President Mahan felt that its usefulness was much restricted because "it settled no great principles, and proposed no definite, well-defined measures for the accomplishment" of peace.

All delegates agreed in their enthusiasm over the hospitality of the French and the French Government. President Mahan wrote to Henry Cowles:

"Nothing can be said in too high commendation of the treatment which the Congress received from the French government. . . . On Saturday evening the entire Congress went in to a *soiree* at the house of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. On Monday we were invited to visit the palaces of Versailles and St. Cloud. In honor of such visitation the water works were ordered to play, an honor only conferred on such great occasions as the visitations of sovereigns, and events of kindred character. The meeting of the Congress in such a place and under such auspices cannot fail to make a deep impression upon the heart of France and Europe too. One little incident will indicate the state of facts on this point. I happened to be standing at one time arm in arm with two gentlemen, one a Scotch and the other an Englishman. Two very interesting gentlemen approached and offered us their hands with the kindest expressions of friendship and gratification. After the greeting, I said to the strangers, 'I American, he Scotchman, and he Englishman.' 'I Frenchman, he Spaniard,' was the reply. We all locked arms in a circle in token of the fact that we were brethren."[45]

The chief result of the Congress was the stimulation of interest in the peace cause. The returning delegates were most effective propagandists. A great reception was held in Boston at which Mayor Josiah Quincy presided. Burritt felt that his efforts had been "crowned with a great success."

No time was given to allow the enthusiasm from this success to die down. Burritt seized the opportunity to stir up interest in another convention to be held in 1850 in Frankfort. Early in January a mass meeting was held in the chapel at Oberlin and the Oberlin Peace League founded. At first the League of Universal Brotherhood, the idea of which was suggested to Burritt

[45]Asa Mahan to H. Cowles, Aug. 31, 1849, printed in the *Oberlin Evangelist,* Sept. 26, 1849.

by Professor Walker,[46] was merely the unorganized sum total of all the signers of the pledge. Later, however, local and national societies were formed. The American National League of Universal Brotherhood was founded in 1848 with Walker as its first president. In 1850 Elihu Burritt was president, Walker, corresponding secretary and Hamilton Hill of Oberlin and William Hosford (an Oberlin graduate) of Michigan among the vice-presidents.[47]

The Oberlin local society was organized on January 8 and 14, 1850. The objects of the League were declared to be "to abolish utterly the custom of international war, and to promote universal peace among the nations of the earth." These objects were to be promoted "by holding forth the truth respecting the cost, the folly, the manifold evils, and the sinfulness of war; and also the desirableness and practicability of universal peace; by employing all appropriate means to induce our general government to take right action on this subject; and by extending pecuniary aid to active and useful laborers in this cause." Twelve resolutions were adopted containing the usual platitudes and three resolutions of a practical nature. One of these resolutions recommending the cutting of the "sinews of war" by opposing taxes and loans to be used for military purposes was attacked from the floor but finally passed, nevertheless. Another resolution proposed petitioning Congress to negotiate arbitration treaties with all civilized powers. A third hailed "with joy the call for a Congress to meet at Frankfort, Germany, during the present season."

Dr. Isaac Jennings was chosen chairman, Deacon H. A. Pease, treasurer; and William Dawes, Hamilton Hill, Henry Cowles, I. Mattison of the *Peace Banner*, G. N. Allen, N. W. Hodge, and Amos Dresser were on the board of managers. The Constitution provided that members should adopt the "Pledge of the League of Universal Brotherhood." It is unlikely that Oberlin leaders had changed their views on defensive war but they doubtless felt that it was inexpedient to quibble about such matters when the cause of Peace so needed all its friends. Burritt certainly had fully conquered Oberlin, at last.

[46]Walker to Burritt, quoted from the *Christian Citizen* in the *Oberlin Evangelist*, Apr. 15, 1846.

[47]*Christian Citizen*, Apr. 21, 1849, and May 18, 1850.

The *Christian Citizen* praised the Oberlin group in no uncertain terms: "Our brethren in the 'banner town,' Oberlin, Ohio, have opened a new campaign of operations in their community, which, we are confident, will be attended with a success equal to their best expectation. They occupy a very important portion of the great American field of labor; and we hope they will sow in a faith that never withholds its hand, but scatters its seed of love morning, noon, and night, in all places and seasons. What a work for human brotherhood they would accomplish, if they could, as it were, create a moral atmosphere in Oberlin, which, being inhaled by hundreds of young men connected with the Institute in that place, should transform their first ideas, and make them breathe forth in their future life and ministration the spirit and principles of Peace!" This, of course, was exactly what the Oberlin leaders hoped to do.[48]

Early in the spring of 1850 President Mahan returned, and his appearance stimulated further activity. The Lorain County Peace Society was revived and a meeting scheduled for July 4 to hear Mahan and consider what might be done for the Frankfort Congress. The meeting took place in Oberlin according to schedule, Mahan in his address in the morning developing "the foundation principles of the modern Peace movement." At the afternoon session a group of resolutions were explained and adopted: "that war . . . assuming to do what should be done by a High Court of nations, promising to obtain rights by inflicting infinite wrongs and to conquer a peace and to multiply its blessings by generating the untold mischiefs and miseries of war, has shown itself to be despicably absurd in principle and ruinously desolating in practice," "that the cardinal doctrine of the Peace movement, which is the substitution in place of war of those long tried and proved terms of promoting justice; namely, *written law;* organized courts and forms of arbitration,—is unquestionably sound in principle and cannot fail to be most felicitous to human well-being in practice," "that inasmuch as the efficient power of law in all virtuous and intelligent communities lies not in the swords, but in enlightened virtuous public sentiment; therefore, we have no occasion to rely on the sword to sustain and enforce the decisions of a High Court of nations—

[48]Reports of their meetings in the *Oberlin Evangelist,* 1850 and *Burritt's Christian Citizen,* Feb. 2, 1850, supplement each other.

the public sentiment that will create such a court,—and will find utterance through its decisions being in reality mightier and more availing to the cause of peace and justice than armies," that "we deem Conventions and Congresses of the friends of Peace to be of immense utility, especially for the purposes of promoting internation fraternity, and universal brotherhood," and that "to accomplish these great ends it is in our view indispensible that the friends of peace in every village, city or township should organize for this specific end."[49]

Nearly two months previously at a meeting in Columbus an Ohio State Peace Society had been formed. An Ohio society had existed as early as 1815, but it seems long since to have ceased to function. At the meeting in May, 1850, a typical constitution was drawn up and adopted as well as a series of resolutions. These resolutions denounced war from every angle, recognized that women should and could play a large part in the work, approved the peace conventions, and recommended that Congress provide a naval vessel to take delegates to the Frankfort Convention across the Atlantic![50] Oberlin dominated the convention. William Dawes was elected president; Henry Cowles, corresponding secretary and M. B. Bateham, editor of the *Ohio Cultivator*, and Cowles' son-in-law, treasurer. The delegates appointed to attend the Frankfort Congress included William Dawes and Henry Cowles as well as Joshua Giddings, John Rankin and others. Amos Dresser was a member of two important committees and addressed the convention.[51] Professor Cowles was chairman of the committee which drew up the "Address of the Ohio State Peace Society to the People of Ohio:"

"Fellow-citizens of Ohio, the great Peace Reform has begun. Three World's Peace Conventions, namely, at London, Brussels, and Paris—have been held, and another in Frankfort-on-the-Main, is to convene next August. . . . Shall Ohio do its part to abolish the custom of war, and wreath around the nations of the earth the bands of universal brotherhood? . . . Let town-

[49] *Oberlin Evangelist*, June 19, 1850, and July 17, 1850.

[50] A petition from Oberlin citizens asking for "a national vessel to transport delegates to the peace Congress in Germany" was presented to the House of Representatives by Joshua Giddings. It was referred to a committee. H. R. *Journal*, 32 Cong., 1 sess., 983–4, and 1216.

[51] *Elyria Courier*, June 18, 1850, and the *Christian Citizen*, June 8, 1850. The latter is the more complete report.

ships, villages, and cities, churches and other ecclesiastical bodies, colleges, academies, and high schools, organize peace societies, and if they see fit, connect themselves with the State organization. But especially let them take measures, to have at least each Congressional District represented by one or more delegates to the Peace Congress at Frankfort."[52]

Despite the efforts put into the preparations for the Frankfort Congress it hardly attracted as much attention as its predecessor. A large delegation from the United States (probably between thirty and forty) was present at the first session held in the impressive auditorium of St. Paul's church, where the famous Frankfort Parliament had met two years before. The Americans joined the British and French in the praises of Peace and denunciation of War—in long and, often, bombastic and platitudinous orations. Though some Germans took part, most of them were in the galleries wearing uniforms. No peace congress could be really prosperous in the military atmosphere of Germany in the middle of the nineteenth century. Neither William Dawes nor Henry Cowles actually appeared at the convention, though as late as June 28 the latter was making his plans to do so.[53] Hamilton Hill's son, however, attended and reported the proceedings for the *Oberlin Evangelist,* declaring that the meeting was "eminently successful in its projection, progress and termination."[54] Such optimism was possible only for blind enthusiasts in the cause. We see today that the forces of militarism were growing stronger everywhere and that the days of Burritt's international peace movement were already numbered.

Only one more truly international peace congress was held—that which met in London in 1851. Amos Dresser represented Oberlin. Josephine Penfield Bateham (a graduate of Oberlin in 1857 and a step-daughter of Professor Cowles) seems to have been excluded because of the British aversion to women delegates.[55] Mrs. Bateham had been appointed a delegate from Ohio along with Dresser and her husband, M. B. Bateham, editor of the

[52] *Elyria Courier,* June 11, 1850.

[53] Oberlin Evangelist Association, MS Minute Book, June 28, 1850 (O. C. Lib.)

[54] H. A. Hill to Henry Cowles, Frankfort-on-the-Main, Aug. 24, 1850, printed in the *Oberlin Evangelist,* Sept. 25, 1850.

[55] Amos Dresser to Henry Cowles, London, July 11, 1851, (Cowles-Little MSS); Curti, *Op. Cit.,* 186, and Walker, *Memoir of Rev. Amos Dresser.* A certain J. T. Updegraff, a physician from Oberlin, is also listed, but the author has been unable to identify him.—*Reports of the Peace Congresses, 1851,* page 102.

*Ohio Cultivator.* Bateham, himself, was practically an Oberlin man, having been a follower of Finney and his ideas since his Rochester days. Mrs. Bateham was "editress" of the Ladies' Department in her husband's paper and wrote back a number of interesting letters describing her experience. She reported some of the speeches at the convention (heard by her from the gallery) and described the "oft repeated cheers and cries of 'hear,' 'hear,' which welcomed the speakers." But she, like most of the other delegates, was apparently more interested in the Crystal Palace Exposition and the sights and society of a foreign land. She wrote more extensively of the cast iron sculpture and "flowers in coloured pearl" shown at the exposition, of soirees and the "pic-nic of the Olive Leaf Societies in the Anerly tea gardens" where she rode a donkey and drank tea in a tent.[56] The convention apparently didn't produce much of an impression.

In the fifties the anti-slavery cause swallowed up the energies and interest of most reformers; and other reform movements, especially the peace crusade, suffered accordingly. Oberlin's participation in the peace cause was pretty definitely limited to the period 1840 to 1850. True, the ladies participated in the Olive Leaf sewing circle movement[57] and the literary societies debated such questions as, "Can a Christian Minister conscientiously go as chaplain of an army in time of war?" As late as 1854 there was "a somewhat lively discussion" when the Young Men's Lyceum debated whether "the United States should . . . support a standing army in time of peace."[58] In the same year Burritt lectured in favor of Ocean Penny Postage.[59] It was only a few years, however, before Oberlin men by the score were shouldering muskets and donning blue uniforms. In January, 1862, Dr. R. A. Fisher of New Haven lectured in Oberlin on Cannon, Gunpowder, and Projectiles![60]

[56]*Ohio Cultivator,* VII, 227 (Aug. 1, 1851); 253 (Aug. 15), 267 (Sept. 1); 283–284 (Sept. 15). See the sketch of Mrs. Bateham in A. L. Demaree, *The American Agricultural Press* (New York—1941), 162–7.

[57]R. S. Fletcher, "Oberlin in the Fifties," *Loc. Cit.*

[58]Young Men's Lyceum, MS Minutes, Oct. 17, 1854, and Apr. 7, 1857.

[59]*Oberlin Evangelist,* July 5, 1854.

[60]*Ibid.,* Jan. 29, 1862.

## CHAPTER XXI

# *FEMALE REFORMERS*

IT IS a thing positively disagreeable to both sexes to see a woman a public character," declared Professor James H. Fairchild to the students of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute in June, 1849.[1] This was just a little less than two years after the graduation of Lucy Stone. Antoinette Brown, the first ordained woman preacher, and Sallie Holley, the famous anti-slavery lecturer, may have been in the audience, for both were students in Oberlin at the time.

The notoriety of Lucy Stone, Antoinette Brown (Blackwell) and two or three other militant women's rights advocates in the Oberlin student body has obscured the fact that official Oberlin as well as student and town opinion generally opposed them at the time. "They hate Garrison, and women's rights," Lucy Stone wrote to her parents of her Oberlin associates. "I love both, and often find myself at swords' points with them, . . ." It is true that now and then one of the young ladies appeared in bloomers and that the amount of discussion of this badge of militant feminism in the literary societies indicates that others lacked not the desire to wear them so much as the courage.[2] In 1860 a number of Oberlin ladies even came to the polls and demanded the right to vote! But the soberer voice of Oberlin spoke through Professor Fairchild who called the woman suffrage movement a "Rozinante of reform" and said that the idea of women holding office was "too unnatural to be dreamed of." "We think we are progressive," wrote the editor of the *Lorain County News* (Oberlin), "we trust we are generous, we believe we are liberal, we hope we are not destitute of gallantry, we desire to be reformatory, in theory at least, we solemnly aver that we are both a phil-

[1]J. H. Fairchild, *Woman's Rights and Duties* (Oberlin—1849), 18.

[2]Lucy Stone to parents, Aug. 16, 1846 (lent by A. S. Blackwell); H. D. Kingsbury to L. C. Kingsbury, May 10, 1852 (O. C. Lib). From 1851 to 1864 the bloomer question was debated no less than four times in the Young Ladies' Literary Society: July 16, 1851; July 15, 1852; May 4, 1853 and Sept. 7, 1853.

anthropos and a philgynikos, but, bless you, ladies! don't vote."[3]

The women's rights movement of the period before the Civil War succeeded in securing general recognition of the right and propriety of women speaking in public. Oberlin gave only grudging consent, but furnished women with the education which, more than anything else, made their success possible. Oberlin's attitude was that women's high calling was to be the mothers of the race, and that they should stay within that special sphere in order that future generations should not suffer from the want of devoted and undistracted mother care. If women became lawyers, ministers, physicians, lecturers, politicians or any sort of "public characters" the home would suffer from neglect. It is not improbable that one reason why the early Oberlin Fathers favored "joint education" was that it was hoped that thus the young ladies could be more readily kept in their proper relation of awed subjection to the "leading sex." Washing the men's clothing, caring for their rooms, serving them at table, listening to their orations, but, themselves, remaining respectfully silent in public assemblages, the Oberlin "coeds" were being prepared for intelligent motherhood and a properly subservient wifehood.

Oberlin opposed women speaking in public mixed gatherings both on practical and Biblical grounds. In 1838 the Female Principal, Mrs. Alice Welch Cowles, wrote in her diary: "God will not lead me to *speak* or instruct in the assemblies because, if I mistake not, he has told me with other females, not to do so."[4] When Abby Kelley Foster came to Oberlin in 1846, "mounted the rostrum in angry debate," and shook "her delicate fist in grave men's faces," most Oberlin people were properly shocked at the "specimen of what woman becomes when out of her place."[5] True, the second Mrs. Henry Cowles presided at the Temperance Convention at Columbus in 1853, but six years later her husband wrote in the *Oberlin Evangelist* that women might not speak in large public assemblies "without violating the natural sense of propriety which God has given us, or the real sense of scripture."[6]

Lucy Stone's career at Oberlin was one long protest against this

[3]*Lorain County News* (Oberlin), Nov. 7, 1860, and Fairchild, *Op. Cit.*, 25 and 29.

[4]Alice Welch Cowles, MS Journal, July 28, 1838 (Cowles-Little MSS).

[5]Fairchild, Op. Cit., 18 and 28. Also, see above pages 267–269.

[6]*Oberlin Evangelist,* May 25, 1859.

point of view. She came to Oberlin because it was the only college then open to women, in order to prepare herself for the career of a public lecturer. She was determined to get some training in public speaking. Against all precedent she persuaded Professor Thome to allow her and Antoinette Brown to debate before a mixed rhetorical class, but the college authorities forbade a repetition of the performance. Lucy also stirred the Young Ladies' Association to new life and often appeared on its programs. On August 1, 1846, she delivered her first public address, on "Why we rejoice today," at the celebration of the Oberlin Negroes on the anniversary of emancipation in the West Indies: ". . . She ascended the stand and in a clear, full tone, read her own article." Of course, she was much criticized for her boldness. ". . . I was never in a place," she wrote, "where women are so rigidly taught that they must not speak in public."[7] When she finished her collegiate course in 1847 Lucy Stone was determined to read her own essay at Commencement, a thing that young lady candidates for the A.B. had never been allowed to do; she refused, in fact, to write at all if her essay must be read by a man. She prepared a petition to the faculty and to the Ladies' Board asking that she might read her own essay, "but the petition was rejected, on the ground that it was improper for women to participate in public exercises with men." She did not write an essay, protesting that by doing so she would be making "a public acknowledgment of the rectitude of the principle which takes away from women their equal rights, and denies to them the privilege of being co-laborers with men in any sphere to which their ability makes them adequate."[8]

As Antoinette Brown planned to be a minister, she, too, desired an opportunity to gain training and experience in public and semi-public speaking. In 1847 when Lucy was silent in protest, Antoinette read her own essay ("Original Investigation Necessary to the Right Development of Mind") because she was graduating from the Ladies' Department rather than the Col-

[7]A. S. Blackwell, *Lucy Stone*, 60–63, 71–72; Lucy Stone to parents, Aug. 16, 1846 (lent by A. S. Blackwell), and Mrs. Claude U. Gilson, "Antoinette Brown Blackwell, the First Woman Minister" (MS). Mrs. A. B. Blackwell tells in detail how Lucy was disciplined by the Ladies' Board and Miss A. S. Blackwell accepts this (page 63), but Lucy, in her letter to her parents on Aug. 16, says flatly, "I have not been scolded at all." Lucy's essay read on this occasion is in the possession of her daughter. See illustration facing page 250.

[8]A. S. Blackwell, *Op. Cit.*, 67–73.

LUCY STONE
(From a photograph in the Oberlin College Library)

ANTOINETTE BROWN
(From *Autographs for Freedom* [Auburn—1854])

# YOUNG LADIES' COURSE.

## RESIDENT GRADUATES.

| Names. | Residences. |
|---|---|
| Antoinette L. Brown,* - - | *Henrietta, N. Y.* |
| Lettice S. Holmes,* - - | *Ann Arbor, Mich.* |

*Pursuing Theological Course.

## FOURTH YEAR.

| Names. | Residences. |
|---|---|
| Rebecca Bebout, - - - | *Savannah.* |
| Mary E. Cone, - - - | *Bristol, Ill.* |
| Helen M. Cowles, - - - | *Oberlin.* |
| Minerva P. Dayton, - - | *Piqua.* |
| Harriet A. Green, - - - | *Newberry.* |
| Sally Holly, - - - | *Rochester, N. Y.* |
| Amanda Parmelee, - - - | *Oberlin.* |
| Clarinda Parmelee, - - | *Oberlin.* |
| A. R. Skinner, - - - | *Chelsea, Vt.* |
| Lucy A. Stanton, - - - | *Cleveland.* |
| Eunice Thompson, - - - | *Medina.* |

**Fourth Year Ladies, 11.**

A PAGE FROM THE 1849–50 *CATALOGUE*

Antoinette Brown could not be regularly classified as a student in the Theological Department.

lege Course. Her battle really began when Lucy left Oberlin and she (Antoinette) began her theological study. The faculty refused to receive her as a regular member of the Theological Department but allowed her to attend the classes if she cared to. She was registered in the catalogue as a "resident graduate, pursuing Theological Course"! She wrote sensibly to Lucy, who thought she had come back to Oberlin "upon dishonorable terms": "I came back here just upon no terms at all. They refused to receive me in the Institution. I came back to study Theology and get knowledge. I do get it; they don't interfere. I am not responsible for their conduct or decisions. . . . I am bound to put myself into the most favorable position for improvement possible while the day for improvement lasts . . . and what if they or anybody else think I act unwisely, or dishonorably, or foolishly, what can that be to me? I respect their advice, but I do not abide by their decisions."[9] Professor Morgan was thoroughly out of sympathy with her aims and efforts and frankly told her so—"he had conscientious scruples in reference to young ladies' delivering orations and preaching sermons." Professor Finney, though he did not believe that women were "generally called upon to preach or speak in public," allowed her to take an active part in his classes, even calling upon her to give her religious experiences.[10] Probably Antoinette Brown's greatest triumph was her admission to the Theological Literary Society, in whose meetings she took a full part—in "discussion, orations and essays." "They talked and talked about preventing me but at last let it go," she wrote to Lucy. Prof. Morgan "would have no discussion or declamation from the ladies but as it was a society, the members had a right to say what I might do and they were too evenly divided to prevent me from speaking."[11] She was the only young lady who ever belonged to one of the regular men's literary societies. When she finished her theological studies in 1850 she received no recognition at Commencement, and she was tactful enough not to request ordination. In May, 1853, she returned to Oberlin and addressed the Young Ladies' Literary

[9]"Nettie" (Antoinette Brown) to Lucy Stone,—1847 (in the possession of Miss Alice Stone Blackwell). Her commencement essay was published in the *Oberlin Evangelist*, Sept. 29, 1847.

[10]Antoinette Brown to Lucy Stone [1848], in Mrs. Claude U. Gilson, "Antoinette Brown Blackwell, the First Woman Minister," a MS kindly lent by the author.

[11]Theological Literary Society, MS Minutes, Apr. 17, 1848, and Gilson, *Op. Cit.*

Society on "Woman's Sphere." In September she was ordained in her own church at South Butler, N. Y., by the Rev. Luther Lee of Syracuse, Gerrit Smith delivering an address. So Oberlin reluctantly gave to America its first ordained woman Protestant minister.[12]

President Mahan always favored allowing the young ladies to take part in speaking exercises in mixed groups. In 1839 he and Professor Thome proposed that the ladies' and men's rhetorical classes meet together and that the former as well as the latter should read their compositions before these "coeducational" classes. The young ladies "from modesty, or delicacy. . . felt reluctant to read compositions before" the young men and petitioned against the proposal. Some of them, it is said, "went to their rooms, and *wept,* at the dire necessity, they supposed to be laid upon them." The separate classes were reestablished.[13] Professor Thome, as we have already seen, let Lucy Stone and Antoinette Brown engage in a debate in his rhetorical class in the middle forties. President Mahan favored allowing Lucy Stone to read her own essay at Commencement. In the following year, 1848, he moved heaven and earth in an effort to secure permission for his daughter Anna to read her own essay on Wednesday with the men of the college class. "But the Faculty moved straight along notwithstanding, & voted that she have the usual alternative of reading her own piece Tuesday, or of having it read by some gentleman on Wednesday." A similar denial met similar requests from Sarah Pellet in 1851 and Antoinette Edgerton in 1854.[14]

In 1854 an official statement of policy was made in the *Evangelist*:

"The meeting on Tuesday is a Ladies' Meeting; that on Wednesday is a gentlemen's meeting. On Tuesday a lady—the Female Principal presides; the Ladies' Board occupy the stand; young ladies exclusively sing, the young lady pupils fill the orchestra, and none but ladies appear before the audience. If gentlemen mingle in the audience, they come to attend a ladies'

[12]Y. L. L. S., MS Minutes, May 16, 1853; Blackwell, *Lucy Stone,* 299, and Antoinette Brown to Gerrit Smith, Dec. 26, 1851; Aug. 16, 23, Oct. 13, 1853, and Feb. 8, 1855 (Gerrit Smith MSS). See the sketch of A. B. B. in the *D. A. B.*

[13]J. P. Cowles' letters in the *Ohio Observer* (Hudson), Nov. 13 and 20, 1839.

[14]Henry Cowles to Mrs. Cowles, July 28, 1848 (Cowles—Little MSS); Faculty Minutes, Aug. 7, 1844, and L. B. M., Sept. 22, 1851, and Aug. 5, 1854.

meeting, in which the most fastidious cannot object to having ladies read their essays.

"On Wednesday, a gentleman presides, gentlemen fill—not to say crowd—the stand, the speakers are gentlemen, and those young gentlemen do not read their essays, but deliver them with whatever rhetoric they may be able to command.

"These circumstances make a wide difference between the two occasions, a difference which, duly seen and appreciated, repels the charge of inconsistency in permitting the personal reading in the former case and not in the latter.

"The young ladies of the College class have never been hindered from reading their essays—with their own sex—in connection with the Female Department."[15]

Essays were read for the young lady graduates in 1855 and 1856 also. There were no candidates in 1857. Mary Raley, in 1858, seems to have been the first to read her own composition on Wednesday, a practice which was followed subsequently. Thus at last the young lady graduates of the Collegiate Department won the right to *read essays* at Commencement with their male classmates if not to *deliver orations*.[16]

At least as early as 1860 young ladies also took part in the Junior Exhibition, but an Oberlin student writing of the event in the *University Quarterly* warned the public:

"Let none . . . ignorantly fancy that we here hold 'the more advanced views' of woman's rights and duties, and that the fair performers at the Junior Exhibition were raving Bloomerites, quarreling with customs and abusing St. Paul. Our college does not produce this genus. On the other hand, it has been partly Oberlin's mission to show that a liberal education does not rob woman of her nature, 'divest her of the softer graces' and give her a masculine character."[17]

But Oberlin's little group of "raving Bloomerites" was better known to the public than the great majority of more conservative and decorous ladies. Lucy Stone, Antoinette Brown, and Betsey Mix Cowles of Austinburg, all former Oberlin coeds, played

[15]Sept. 13, 1854.

[16]*Oberlin Evangelist*, Sept. 1, 1858, and Sept. 11, 1861. The latter is the first categorical admission of the practice.

[17]"Oberlin College" in the *University Quarterly*, II, 372 (Oct. 1860). A petition to allow a "female student" to read her composition at the Senior Preparatory Exhibition was refused by the Ladies' Board in 1852.—L. B. M., June 9, 1852.

leading roles in the radical woman's rights movement. Of course, the first National Woman's Rights Convention was held at Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848. The second was held at Salem, Ohio, in 1850, and Oberlinite Betsey Cowles was elected president. Daniel Hise, a liberal Salemite, recorded that the "Convention was a perfect jam all Enthusiasm—they did honor to their sex, cursed be the pityful whining Politicians, that still persists in withholding from her, her Political rights." Betsey Cowles was a guest in the Hise household and he was much impressed by her intellect and playful disposition. At the fourth national convention, held at Cleveland in 1853, the speakers included Lucretia Mott, Mrs. Foster, Mrs. Bloomer—herself, and Lucy Stone and Antoinette Brown.[18]

Though the women's rights movement was frowned upon in Oberlin as an ultra-radical reform, there was one type of reform which was considered the legitimate and special sphere of "females": the movement for the reform in sexual morals or "moral reform." This does not mean that men did not play a part in it in Oberlin and in the nation (the founder and patron saint was a man), but men were decidedly in a minority. Woman's place was in the home; the moral reform movement was a crusade to protect and purify the family, therefore, it was preeminently proper that women should participate in it.

The Rev. John R. McDowall, a product of the Princeton Theological Seminary, began to take a deep interest in the abandoned women of New York City in the late 1820's. Soon he came to be recognized as the founder of a new cause, the prophet of a new reform. With the aid of William Goodell, the anti-slavery editor, he began the publication of a little bi-weekly paper, the *Female Advocate,* devoted to the rescue of "female profligates" and the formation of moral societies. This was in 1832. In the following year the *Advocate* was restricted largely to the temperance cause; and another periodical, *McDowall's Journal,* was established to be the organ of the new crusade. So fanatical and frank was McDowall in his campaign for "moral purity" that the "respectable" elements in New York society

[18]Charles G. Galbreath, *History of Ohio,* (Chicago—1925), II, 329–330; extracts from the MS Diary of Daniel Howell Hise (Apr. 19–20, 1850) furnished by Prof. Lewis Atherton of the University of Missouri, and *Cleveland Daily True Democrat,* Oct. 7–8, 1853, quoted in the *Annals of Cleveland.*

demanded the suspension of his journal. A grand jury presented it as a public nuisance, with the approbation of papers like the *New York Observer,* and McDowall and his *Journal* retired from the scene under a cloud.[19]

But the efforts of the "Martyr of the Seventh Commandment" had not been in vain. As was to be expected a group of the New York City "brethren" took up the movement. Late in 1830 they formed the "Christian Benevolent Society"—"the object of which is to endeavor to reform depraved and abandoned females." McDowall was employed as their agent. Anson G. Phelps and Arthur Tappan were on the executive committee. The next year the name "New York Magdalen Society" was adopted; Tappan was elected president; McDowall was chaplain.[20] This organization was short-lived, but in 1833 a Society for Moral Reform was founded, which in September of that year grew into the American Society for Promoting the Observance of the Seventh Covenant. Unlike its predecessor, this society devoted itself primarily to "the preservation of the virtuous," a policy followed throughout the remainder of the history of the movement. Its officers included such Finneyite reformers as Beriah Green and John Frost of the Oneida Institute, Josiah Chapin of Providence, Horace Bushnell and Theodore Weld (both Oneidas who went to Lane Seminary), Joshua Leavitt of the *New York Evangelist,* and Lewis Tappan.[21]

In the following year the New York Female Moral Reform Society, destined to be the most powerful and long-lived organization engaged in this movement, was formed as an auxiliary of the American Society for Promoting the Observance of the Seventh Covenant. Very shortly the latter sank into a coma and the female society itself became the active national unit, receiving both male and female moral reform societies from all over the nation as auxiliaries. Mrs. Charles G. (Lydia Andrews) Finney became "First Directress" (the highest executive officer) and Mrs. William Green, Jr. (whose husband became a leading member of the Oberlin Professorship Association founded in

[19]*New York Observer,* Mar. 22, 1834; Bertha-Monica Stearns, "Reform Periodicals and Female Reformers, 1830–1860," *American Historical Review,* XXXVII, 681–683 (July, 1932), and the *Friend of Man,* Jan. 12, 19, 1837.

[20]*McDowall's Journal,* II, 33 (May, 1834), and S. Brown to Finney, Jan. 6, 1831 (Finney MSS).

[21]*McDowall's Journal,* II, 6–7 (Jan., 1834), and *Emancipator,* Feb. 18, 1834.

1835) was "Second Directress." Mr. Finney addressed the session of the society at the Chatham Street Chapel in December, 1834. He told the ladies that Christians should "visit these houses, and fill them with Bibles and Tracts and make them places of religious conversation and of prayer, and convert their wretched inmates *on the spot*."[22]

The New York Female Moral Reform Society bought *McDowall's Journal* and continued its publication, in 1835 and later years, as the *Advocate of Moral Reform*. Under the able editorship of Sarah Towne Smith (later Mrs. Martyn) the periodical became the centralizing organ of the national moral reform movement, contributing much to the prestige and power of the society which controlled it. By 1837 it enjoyed a paid circulation of over 16,000, several thousand more numbers of each issue being distributed gratis.

Over 250 local societies were auxiliary to the New York Female Moral Reform Society in 1837: 138 in New York, 25 in Massachusetts, 29 in Connecticut, 27 in Ohio and the remainder scattered from Maine to Michigan. These societies included over 15,000 active members. It was appropriate that the name should be changed, as it was in 1839, to the American Female Moral Reform Society, its activities having become truly national in scope. The ladies of the society recognized that, "The sin of licentiousness has made fearful havoc in the world, corrupting all flesh, drowning souls in perdition, and exposing us to the vengeance of . . . God, whose law in this respect has been trampled on almost universally not only by actual transgression, but by the tacit consent of the virtuous, and by the almost perfect silence of those whom He has commanded to 'cry aloud and spare not.' " They determined to strive, through the *Advocate,* to awaken "interest in the subject of Moral Reform by the diffusion of light and information," to labor for "the *formation of a public conscience* in relation to the sin of licentiousness," and "to afford a channel of communication, in which the thoughts and feelings of females throughout the coun-

[22]*Emancipator,* Dec. 2, 1834. The experiences of Mrs. Margaret Prior, an agent of the society who carried out Finney's injunction literally, are narrated in Sarah H. Ingraham, *Walks of Usefulness, or, Reminiscences of Mrs. Margaret Prior* (New York—1844).

try may more freely mingle."[23] The years from 1836 to 1845, the period during which Sarah T. Smith was "editress" of the *Advocate,* constituted the hey-day of the reform.

In the early thirties the movement was taken up enthusiastically by many young men—particularly college and theological students. In February of 1833 McDowall reported the receipt of letters of commendation from students at Auburn Theological Seminary, Princeton Theological Seminary, Andover Seminary, and the Baptist Theological Seminary at Hamilton, New York. In the same year a "standing Committee on Lewdness" was chosen at Western Reserve College, including Horace C. Taylor, later of Oberlin, and H. H. Spalding, the Oregon missionary. On the 15th of April of the following year the student body assembled in the Chapel "to take into consideration measures for the promotion of *moral purity.*" An organization called the Magdalen Society of the Western Reserve College was formed, and H. C. Taylor was elected president.[24] In the spring of 1834 the Moral Reform Society of Brown University and the Moral Purification Society at Williams were established. Similar organizations appeared shortly after at the Oneida Institute in New York, and at Amherst. George A. Avery and M. B. Bateham were members of the Young Men's Moral Reform Society of Rochester, which appointed a "vigilant committee" whose duty was to discover houses of ill fame and report them to the police.[25]

Oberlin was always in the van in any reform which could be reconciled with Christianity, and took up this movement enthusiastically. Even in 1834, while the colony and Institute was yet in embryo, the Oberlin Church contributed ten dollars to McDowall's cause.[26] In the following year two moral reform societies were founded:the Young Men's Moral Reform Society of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute and the Oberlin Female Moral Reform Society.

The young men were the first to organize. They officially

[23]*McDowall's Journal,* II, 44–45 (June, 1834); *Advocate of Moral Reform,* III, 265–267 (June 1, 1837), and 311 (Aug. 15, 1837).

[24]*McDowall's Journal,* I, 13 (Feb., 1833); II, 22 (Mar., 1834) 40 (May, 1834).

[25]*Ibid.,* II, 55 (July, 1834); *Advocate of Moral Reform,* II, 7 (Jan., 1836), and Young Men's Moral Reform Society of Rochester, MS Minutes, Aug. 5, Nov. 10, 1836; Aug. 12, 1837.

[26]*McDowall's Journal,* II, 48 (June, 1834).

recognized "the destructive prevalence of the vice of licentiousness" which was "threatening to deluge our land with the miasma of Sodom," and recognized it as their duty, "irrespective of the taunts, the reproach, or the calumny of drunkards, infidels, or time-serving moralists, when they see this enemy of everything that is of good report, hovering over the habitations of domestic bliss and innocence, and carrying from the abodes of peace the sons and daughters of chastity, to raise their voice like a trumpet-tongued angel of mercy and sound the alarm." Forty dollars was raised to pay subscriptions to the *Advocate*. One of the members of the Executive Committee was E. H. Fairchild, later President of Berea. The Oberlin men's society was the first such society to become auxiliary to the New York Female Moral Reform Society, a practice encouraged by that society and followed by a few other young men's societies.[27]

As in New York, so in Oberlin, the chief burden of the moral reform movement fell on the women. The men's society still existed in 1845 but was not really active.[28] The minutes of the Oberlin Female Moral Reform Society extend from 1835 through 1859. The Constitution, adopted in 1835 and published in the *Advocate,* provided the usual machinery of organization and stated the purpose of the society: "The first object of this society shall be to promote and sustain moral purity among the virtuous. We therefore pledge ourselves to refrain from all licentious conversation, to cultivate and promote purity of feeling, of action, and dress, both in ourselves, our associates, and all who come within the sphere of our influence. The second object shall be to reclaim by such means as are sanctioned by the word of God, all those who have wandered from the path of virtue."[29]

Oberlin really took the task of reclamation seriously. Three reformed ladies were, at one time, brought from New York City and enrolled as students in the Institute.[30]

The Oberlin society prospered. In the six years 1835 through 1840 inclusive 380 members were associated with it. In the latter

[27]*Advocate of Moral Reform,* I, 57–58 (Aug., 1835), and 65 (Sept., 1835).
[28]*Ibid.,* XI, 112 (July 15, 1845).
[29]*Ibid.,* II, 13 (Feb., 1836), and Oberlin Female Moral Reform Society, MS Minutes.
[30]Emily Hallock to Mrs. Finney, Jan. 4, 1838 (Finney MSS); Delazon Smith, *History of Oberlin.* The ladies are listed among the students in the *Catalogue.*

year 71 copies of the *Advocate* were regularly received at the Oberlin post office. By 1854 the total number of names on the register of members had passed 850 and over a hundred copies of the *Advocate* were taken. Five years later this number had been increased by twenty-five.[31] There were as many as 225 active members at one time in the middle forties. In 1837 it had the fourth largest membership of the 268 societies then in active existence. Considerable gifts of money were secured to aid the work of the national organization, several Oberlin women being constituted life members at an expense to the local society of ten dollars each. In 1854 the editor of the *Advocate* wrote, in commenting on the Oberlin sorority: "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all."[32]

The membership of the Oberlin Female Moral Reform Society included married women—wives of professors and townsmen —and also young ladies of the Institute. The activities and interests of the society must have overlapped somewhat with the Maternal Association. The married members of the reform society were probably all members of the Maternal Association,[33] and the latter organization often discussed moral problems. The leaders of the society among the older women included Mrs. Alice Welch Cowles and Mrs. M. D. P. Cowles (the first and second wives of Professor Henry Cowles), Mrs. Esther Shipherd (wife of the Founder), the first two Mrs. Finneys, Mrs. Mahan (wife of President Mahan), Mrs Dascomb, Mrs. Caroline Rudd Allen (wife of the Professor of Music), and Miss Mary Atkins (Assistant in the Female Department from 1847 to 1849 and later the founder of Mills College in California). Most of them and a few others became life members in the national society.

Alice Welch Cowles was the head and front of the moral reform movement in Oberlin. She was the first president of the local society and for some years the Western vice-president of the national organization. Upon her death in 1843 an extended

[31]Oberlin Female Moral Reform Society, "Annual Report for 1840–1841" in MS Minutes, and Annual Report for 1853–54 in the *Advocate of Moral Reform and Family Guardian,* XX, 100–101 (July 1, 1854), and *Ibid.,* XXV, 108 (Apr. 1, 1859).

[32]*Advocate of Moral Reform,* XI, 112 (July 15, 1845); III, 311 (Aug. 15, 1837); XIV, 112 (July 15, 1848); XX, 100–101 (July 1, 1854), and Oberlin Female Moral Reform Society, MS Minutes, *passim.*

[33]See below pages 585–587.

obituary was published in the *Advocate*.[34] Hardly a meeting of the society passed that she did not preside or speak. "Causes of Impurity," "Early Engagements," "Simplicity and Economy in Dress" were among the topics which she discussed.[35] Mrs. Finney, the first chairman of the New York society, naturally also became very active in the cause in Oberlin after her removal there with her husband in 1835. When, for example, at a meeting of the Oberlin society in 1839 Mrs. Cowles offered a few facts "on insults to ladies in hotels & steamboats at Cleveland," Mrs. Finney also spoke "on licentiousness on steamboats & in hotels" and warned "mothers to watch their children from their infancy." After the death of Mrs. Cowles, Mrs. Finney succeeded her as vice-president of the American Female Moral Reform Society from Ohio. Her death, in 1848, also received a lengthy notice. The Oberlin society sent a delegate, Mrs. Lucy Gilbert, to the annual meeting of the New York Society in 1838.[36] At the national annual meeting of 1846 Eliza C. Stewart, then of Troy, wife of the co-founder of Oberlin, was an active member. Her husband later showed his sympathy with the cause by running a large advertisement of his stove in the *Advocate and Guardian*.

A peculiarity and great advantage of the Oberlin organization was to be found in the opportunity to influence the large body of young lady students. In a late annual report the conversion of these students to moral reform was recognized as a major aim of the society. "Our situation throws us into contact with a mass of youthful mind," wrote the secretary, "over whom we would gladly exert a purifying influence."[37] In the thirties and early forties Mrs. Cowles, who was also Principal of the Female Department, recognized the possibility of aiding college discipline by encouraging the society. In 1842 a resolution was passed providing that members should report all cases of unchastity to the next meeting if unable to bring about reform by a personal appeal. Mrs. Cowles secured an amendment to the effect that, in cases of delinquency discovered among the students, members

[34]Nov. 15, 1843.

[35]Lecture notes in Cowles-Little MSS.

[36]Oberlin Female Moral Reform Society, MS Minutes, Oct. 12, 1839; *Advocate of Moral Reform and Family Guardian*, XIV, 19 (Feb. 1, 1848), and *Advocate of Moral Reform*, IV, 85–86 (June 1, 1838).

[37]Annual report for 1853–54 in the *Advocate of Moral Reform and Family Guardian*, XX, 100–101 (July 1, 1854).

should report to the Female Principal. Thus all society members supposedly became informers for the "Dean of Women."[38] Mrs. Cowles lectured the young ladies repeatedly in behalf of the cause and the society. In 1841 she expressed to them her wish that one maxim could be written "as with the point of a diamond upon [their] very hearts: *Never allow yourself to be caressed or fondled over by the other sex till after marriage.*" She called upon them to aid moral reform as a cause and to contribute to the society "one cent, six cents, fifty cents." In a talk given the following year she said frankly, "I hope no young lady will fail to become a member [of the Moral Reform Society], unless her character and principles are such as to injure rather than do good[!]"[39] No wonder there was a large enrollment of ladies from the Institute! If they did not join, it was tantamount to wearing a scarlet letter!

Among the young ladies who were active as members were Caroline Rudd, Mary Hosford, Elizabeth Prall (the first three women to receive college degrees), Lucy Stone and Antoinette Brown, Mary Ann Adams (later for a time head of the Female Department), and Sarah Pellet. Lucy Stone was secretary and treasurer in 1845. Antoinette Brown was on the executive committee three years later. Caroline Rudd was a leading figure both as a student and in later years as the wife of Professor George Allen. Elizabeth Prall took a really prominent part in her student days. At a meeting in 1836 she read an essay on "What is the proper treatment of licentious men?" and four years later introduced a resolution, which was adopted by the society, "That the disgrace of the gentleman who takes improper liberties with a young lady, shall be as great, as that of the young lady who permits such liberties." Sometimes these female students had something very practical to offer as when Miss Mary Foster of Boston "gave an account of her journey from Oberlin to Boston last fall which was very instructive and was calculated to put females, who are traveling alone, on their guard in reference to those gentlemen who are too ready to proffer their assistance."[40] Even youngsters, like twelve-year-old Mary Louisa Cowles, who was just entering the Preparatory Department, sometimes at-

[38]Oberlin Female Moral Reform Society, MS Minutes, Sept. 28, 1842.
[39]Lecture notes in Cowles-Little MSS.
[40]MS Minutes, Feb. 15, 1836; May 20, 1840; Undated—early in 1844, and *passim.*

tended society meetings. "Went to ladies moral reform society," this young reformer wrote in her diary. "Mrs. Finney spoke to the ladies."[41]

Sometimes outside speakers appeared on the program. Dr. William Alcott of Boston, the health reformer, spoke on "dress, diet, marriage" in 1840. A Mr. Foote, the agent of the New York Female Moral Reform Society, addressed the Oberlin group in 1836.[42] In 1840, Sarah T. Smith, the "editress" of the *Advocate,* made a speaking tour into the West, appearing before the moral reform societies at Elyria and at Oberlin.[43] She spoke principally to the students, pointing "out the immense responsibilities resting upon Young Ladies educated here, surrounded by such a flood of light, and enjoying privileges probably superior to any in the world."[44] Her audience seems to have been very favorably impressed. The Oberlin Fathers were so enthusiastic that the Prudential Committee invited her to take the place of Mrs. Cowles in "the Superintendence of the Ladies Department," Mrs. Cowles desiring to retire on account of failing health. The pious and very moral lady considered the proposition long and earnestly. She seems to have been much attracted to Oberlin, both by its enthusiasm for moral reform and by the doctrine of perfectionism which she had espoused. Finally in September, however, she gave her answer in the negative. She feared "the effects of that climate on a constitution already debilitated, and which has suffered from the western *bilious fever* somewhat severely," and she felt that no one could fill her place in the moral reform movement. It seemed to her to be her duty to stay in New York, despite the attraction of the work in Oberlin. "It is more painful to me than I can easily express," she wrote to Secretary Burnell, "to give up the cherished hope of again seeing the beloved brethren and sisters in that garden of the Lord, as a *fellow laborer,* but if I am where Jesus would have me, all is infinitely *well.*" "What I can do for Oberlin," she added, "shall always be done, to the full extent of my consciousness of ability."[45] Miss

[41]R. S. Fletcher, "Oberlin in the Fifties as Recorded by Twelve-Year-Old Mary Louisa Cowles," *Oberlin Alumni Magazine,* (May 1, 1931).

[42]MS Minutes, Apr., 1840, and May 13, 1836.

[43]Female Moral Reform Society of Elyria, MS Minutes, [June] 1840.

[44]Oberlin Female Moral Reform Society, MS Minutes, June, 1840.

[45]P. C. M., June 23, 1840, and Sarah T. Smith to Levi Burnell, Sept. 9, 1840 (Treas. Off., File I).

Smith married the Reverend Mr. Martyn in the following year. It is not improbable that the prospect of this alliance may have been a factor in the decision.

The Oberlin men most interested in moral reform were Amos Dresser (the non-resistant), President Mahan, and the two editors of the *Evangelist:* H. C. Taylor and Henry Cowles. The support of the two latter was, of course, especially important because of the publicity secured through the columns of the paper. Mahan's support was important because of his national reputation as the sponsor of perfectionism and his position as the official head of the Oberlin Institute. In 1842 he delivered a lecture to the local society on methods of promoting the cause. His address before the American Physiological Society in Boston in 1839 on the "Intimate Relation between Moral, Mental and Physical Law" was printed in both the *Graham Journal* and the *Advocate of Moral Reform.*[46]

Mahan also aided in the founding of the moral reform society in Elyria which became, therefore, in a sense an offspring of the Oberlin organization.[47] A Female Moral Reform Society of Sheffield was formed at that place, made up of local ladies and members of the branch school then associated with Oberlin. In 1846 a society was organized at Olivet, Shipherd's second Oberlin, sponsored by Amos Dresser.[48] Doubtless other societies founded under Oberlin influence have escaped the record.

An agent of the New York society, in addressing the Oberlin Female Moral Reform Society in 1836, listed the causes of immorality as he saw them: " . . . Impure imagination, Dress of females, Slavery, Public opinion licenses the evil, Females receiving visits of gentlemen protracted to a late hour, Low prices of labor in cities, Voluptuousness, Balls, Parties, Theaters, Novel Reading, Classics, Prints and Books."[49] The crusade for a reform in morals led the reformers to take a stand on all of these subjects. They insisted on the strictest etiquette in the association of the sexes, set up an extremely modest standard of dress, decried dancing, considered the reading of novels injurious, and branded theaters as the very workshops of Satan.

[46]Oberlin Female Moral Reform Society, MS Minutes, July, 1842, and *Advocate of Moral Reform,* June 15, 1839.

[47]Female Moral Reform Society of Elyria, MS Minutes, Apr. 15, 1839.

[48]*Advocate of Moral Reform,* III, 326–327 (Sept. 15, 1837), and XII, 142 (Sept. 15, 1846).

[49]MS Minutes, May 13, 1836.

Females were cautioned to resist the approaches of all males other than their husbands, and to be constantly on the alert for insidious attacks upon their chastity. "Courting after bedtime" was held to be an exceedingly dangerous practice. "Seeking a wife," wrote "Philo Decorum" in *McDowall's Journal,* "is certainly not a deed of darkness. Then, why not do it in daylight? . . . Let every young lady, then, lay it down as an unalterable rule: That she will in no case, keep company after her usual hour of retiring to rest, and the consequence will be, they will be almost certain to get good, genteel, and decent husbands."[50] The constitution of the Oberlin society included a special article dealing with the subject: "Believing that the prolonging of visits with any gentleman after the usual hour for retirement, is one of the 1st steps toward licentiousness, we pledge ourselves to discountenance such practices by precept and example."[51]

An earnest effort was made to establish an attitude of deepest reverence toward the marriage relation and all that related to it. The Oberlin constitution pledged the members "to speak of the Marriage institution in such a manner as shall sustain its original honor, and its character of moral purity." Mrs. Cowles often urged upon the young lady students a soberer and more sensible view of marriage. In the autumn of 1836 she devoted one entire talk to this subject, laying down certain rules as basic:

1. Never speak lightly of marriage.
2. Never join with those who do.
3. Never make indecent allusions.
4. Speak of marriage in a dignified, serious manner.
5. Do not pretend that you never think of this subject.
6. Avoid anxiety about it.
7. Commit the subject cheerfully to God.[52]

Because of the serious, indeed divine, nature of the ordinance of marriage the young females were warned against early and hasty engagements.

Of course, the double standard was combated. The constitution of the Young Men's Moral Reform Society of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute was severely criticized by the editor of the *Advocate* because it pointed "no finger of scorn at *licentious*

[50]*McDowall's Journal,* II, 19 (March, 1834).
[51]In MS Minutes of the Oberlin Female Moral Reform Society.
[52]Lecture notes in Cowles-Little MSS.

*men.*" The female society, however, officially declared the belief "that the licentious man is not only *as guilty,* but in a majority of instances more guilty than the licentious woman."[53]

Immodest or supposedly indecent dress was repeatedly attacked by the reformers. In 1834, McDowall published a letter from an anonymous correspondent: "I have long expected that some individual accustomed to the use of the pen, and an advocate for *Public Morals,* or at least opposed to *Public Indecency,* would give a word of wholesome advice to females, about dress. I have, however, waited in vain. Nothing regarding it has appeared to my knowledge. The present fashion is, to cut their frocks, &c., so open about the neck, that they rest but little if any upon the shoulders, but slide down on the arms, nearly half way to the elbows. The *exposure* which this effects, especially when they stoop forward, I need not define. *All eyes must witness it.*"[54] Even male attire was occasionally criticized as being insufficiently modest and sober.

Mrs. Alice Welch Cowles, the leader in Oberlin moral reform, was zealous in behalf of modest attire. In 1836, she asked her old teacher and friend, Zilpah Grant: "Ought not young ladies to be told what impressions it makes on the minds of gentlemen, respecting female character and dispositions, when they see them exposing their necks, or making other efforts to attract and display?"[55] Evidently her question was answered in the affirmative for some time later she said in an address to her young charges: "I suppose that a lady gaily dressed, especially if she exposes a beautiful neck, makes a stronger appeal to the sensual feelings of the other sex than otherwise. On this point I would speak with much caution because I know but little—I long to see a change. While I suppose that simplicity of dress promotes purity of mind I cannot dress otherwise. I do not feel at liberty to have anything in my dress which shall tend to awaken in my husband even the susceptibilities which lead to impurity. I was delighted with the simplicity and purity which seemed to pervade every mind at Mt. Holyoke [which she had recently visited]. When will the time come that there will be as much of the same spirit manifested by young and old, in all our villages & cities."[56] The

[53]*Advocate of Moral Reform,* I, 57 (Aug., 1835).
[54]*McDowall's Journal,* II, 67 (Sept., 1834).
[55]A. W. Cowles to H. Cowles and Zilpah Grant, Jan. 16, 1836 (Cowles MSS).
[56]Lecture notes in Cowles-Little MSS.

Oberlin rule of dress as finally adopted was in Mrs. Cowles' words: "Dress so as not to be noticed." "Dress in such a manner as not to attract particular notice one way or another," said Mrs. Finney.[57]

The dress question was an exceedingly popular one in the Oberlin Female Moral Reform Society. When she spoke before the society in 1840, Sarah T. Smith "dwelt at some length on the subject of dress." At a later meeting in the same year the organization expressed its gratitude "to our heavenly Father for the decided stand taken with us by some of the gentlemen of our acquaintance against the improper, and even *immodest* modes of dress practiced by a few young ladies in our midst." A year later it was resolved that, "we do all in our power to discard not only all indecent, but all unbecoming fashions . . . as being great incentives to crime."[58] Dress was discussed in 1847, 1854, and 1855.

The pictures of the graduating classes of the fifties and sixties show how useless it is to battle against fashion.[59] Even in Oberlin short sleeves and low necks became the rule, though as late as 1864 a young lady who wore such a scantily cut dress might see "only the whites of the eyes" of pious associates.[60]

Dancing was believed to have decidedly immoral tendencies. A writer in the *Advocate* attacked the waltz, which he described as consisting "of a whirling movement, in which the hand of the lady is on the gentleman's shoulder, while his arm encircles her waist." "An unsophisticated American girl would shrink with abhorrence from such personal familiarities if offered to her under any other guise than that of *fashion,*" continues the critic, "but the dictates of this relentless despot must be obeyed at whatever sacrifice." The editor of the *Oberlin Evangelist* pronounced his dictum several years later: "We have never yet heard that dancing parties have improved either health, regular habits, education, refinement of feeling, or piety; we have usually known

[57]Quoted by Mrs. Gerrit (Ann C.) Smith in a letter to Mrs. Finney, Peterboro, Mar. 19, 1839. Mrs. Smith opposed the Oberlin rule because of the differing standards of village and city. Her opinion is of interest because it was her daughter who invented the bloomer. (Finney MSS)

[58]MS Minutes, June, 1840, Sept. 23, 1840; June 22, 1841.

[59]See the illustrations opposite pages 716 and 834.

[60]". . . When I came down in low neck & short sleeves, I only saw the whites of his eyes." Anonymous classmate to Minerva A. Winegar, Oberlin, June 26, 1864 (lent by Mrs. Robert W. Allen, Pasadena, California).

them to prove detrimental and often destructive to all these choice interests: therefore we say, let their sentence be according to their deeds."[61] The rule against dancing at Oberlin was an outgrowth of this attitude.

Novel reading was considered one of the most dangerous stimulants to immorality and soon came to be condemned as an evil in itself.

> PUT DOWN THAT NOVEL! [warned the *Advocate*] *It is wasting your time.*
> PUT DOWN THAT NOVEL! *It is perverting your taste.*
> PUT DOWN THAT NOVEL! *It is giving you false views of life.*
> PUT DOWN THAT NOVEL! *It is endangering your morals.*
> PUT DOWN THAT NOVEL! *It will ruin your soul.*[62]

In another number young men were called to witness the consequences of marrying a lady who read novels:

> I loved her for her mild blue eye,
> And her sweet and quiet air;
> But I'm very sure that I didn't see
> The novel on the chair.

But now—

> The live-long day does Laura read
> In a cushioned easy-chair,
> In slip-shod shoes and dirty gown,
> And tangled, uncombed hair.
> For oh! the meals! I'm very sure
> You ne'er did see such "feeding":
> For the beef is burnt, and the veal is raw,
> And all from novel reading.[63]

A writer in the *Oberlin Evangelist,* even as late as the fifties, declared that novel reading acted "on the mind as ardent spirits do on the body." The novel-reader, he believed, was likely to be driven to insanity or led to infanticide or other crimes. The

[61] *Advocate of Moral Reform,* IV, 169 (Nov. 15, 1838), and *Oberlin Evangelist,* Apr. 10, 1850.
[62] *Advocate of Moral Reform and Family Guardian,* XIV, 11 (Jan. 15, 1848).
[63] *Advocate of Moral Reform,* X, 155 (Oct. 15, 1843).

Oberlin Female Moral Reform Society passed a resolution in 1842, declaring, "That in view of the wrong views of human life instilled—the *time* wasted—the hopes wrecked— and the souls ruined by *novel reading*—it would greatly promote the well being of society, if this style of literature were banished from our world."[64]

Timothy Hudson, for many years Professor of Greek and Latin, felt that all novels were not evil, but found it difficult to distinguish the good from the bad. "My sentiments on the subject of fictitious reading generally are becoming more stern," he wrote to a friend in 1844. "I do not say that I will never read another fiction: but I do say that they will I hope be few and far between. —Happily novels do not embrace the richest and best literature of our grand old English tongue. With the wide realms of Poetry and History and Elegant essays—and science adorned with regal splendor and crowned with a coronet gleaming with gems—with all this I may willingly resign the spider-web creations of the novel weaving tribe—even tho' some things 'beautiful exceedingly' should be relinquished thereby."[65] Most men condemned all novelists. One early Oberlin colonist wrote of "such miserable stuff as the writings of Thackery and Dickens, the Newcombs, Little Dorrit & the Virginians, etc., etc."[66] Bulwer usually came in for an unusually heavy share of condemnation. When in the forties an Oberlin student sent his future wife, also an Oberlin student, a present of one of Bulwer's books, she replied.

"I received your bundle and note this morning in due season. I have not examined the book at all yet, and indeed I don't know what to think about it. Emily has been telling me what President Mahan's opinion of it is, and that *you* almost agreed with him. If it is really impossible for me to keep *my heart right* while reading it, or even improbable that I *shall*; I do not wish to read it,— and I am sure you would not be willing to have me read it. I do not wish to do anything, or read anything that will be injurious to my highest interests . . . At all events, I have reading enough for several days, so I think I will lay Eugene Aram aside until

[64]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Apr. 14, 1858, and MS Minutes, June 1, 1842.

[65]T. B. and B. B. Hudson to Betsey Cowles, Feb. 22, 1844 (lent by Myra Cowles, Austinburg, Ohio).

[66]E. M. Leonard to Gerrit Smith, Sept. 28, 1859 (Gerrit Smith MSS).

*Friday Evening* or till I hear from you again. It *cannot* be wrong *not* to read it—and I like to be on the safe side."[67]

Professor Calvin E. Stowe of Lane Seminary declared of Bulwer "that he deserved only to be pitied, despised and execrated."[68] It was Professor Stowe's wife who turned the tide in favor of the novel and eventually of the theater, also. When reformers admitted the righteousness of reading *Uncle Tom's Cabin* the way was opened for the establishment of a generally more lenient attitude toward fiction. As early as 1848 the Oberlin Maternal Association agreed that children might be allowed to read stories by Charlotte Elizabeth or T. S. Arthur.[69] The ground was thus broken, but Harriet Beecher Stowe finished the job. The literary societies debated the justifiability of novel reading, early and late.[70] In the fifties the younger generation was changing fast. The best friend of a daughter of Professor Cowles and Alice Welch Cowles wrote to her in 1858, without any evidence of consciousness of guilt, of having read books by Charlotte Bronté, James Fenimore Cooper, Mrs. Southworth, John Foster, etc.[71]

The theater was looked upon as the mother of the whole brood of sin in the cities. In 1840 two members of the Oberlin faculty had the temerity to attend a theatrical performance in Columbus. A colleague wrote of the affair to a friend: "Sometime ago Professor [T. B.] Hudson and Tutor [William] Cochran, while attending a meeting of the College of Teachers of this State at Columbus, in the capacity of delegates from O., stole a visit to the *Theatre*. The fact providentially come to the ears of the Faculty and those brethren forthwith addressed a letter to the Faculty *resigning* their posts in the institution."[72] Probably only the early resignation and evident contrition of the culprits saved their official lives. They were reinstated after much heart-searching and praying on the part of their shamed associates and the shocked trustees. The literary societies were very much interested in the theater problem, discussing such questions as: "Can the Theater be so conducted as to be worthy the patronage of

[67] Mary Fairchild to C. H. Baldwin [n.d.] (lent by C. G. Baldwin, Palo Alto, California).

[68] *Advocate of Moral Reform*, IV, 51–52 (Apr. 1, 1838).

[69] Oberlin Maternal Association, MS Minutes, Apr. 1848.

[70] E.g., Dialectic Association, MS Minutes, Mar. 4, 1840, and the Young Men's Lyceum, Apr. 22, 1851.

[71] Frank P. Woodbury to Mary L. Cowles, Feb. 10, 1858 (Cowles-Little MSS).

[72] James Thome to Theodore Weld, June 20, 1840 (Weld MSS).

the good?", what is "the moral influence of theaters," and even "Resolved that Theaters might be made agencies in moral reform."[73] In the fifties with the victory of fashionable dress and novel reading came a relenting toward the theater. In 1856 a Mrs. Webb of Philadelphia read selections from the dramatic version of Uncle Tom's Cabin in the Oberlin College Chapel! The editor of the *Evangelist* conceded that the readings had "an excellent moral and religious influence." But even in 1864 students were forbidden to read Shakespeare in mixed groups, a ban which was first evaded and then, soon after, lifted.[74]

At first moral reform, like the other reforms, depended exclusively upon moral suasion. Like the temperance workers and the abolitionists, however, they eventually determined to call in the arm of the law. In January of 1842 a committee was appointed in the Oberlin Female Moral Reform Society "to circulate petitions to be presented to the legislature, for the suppression of licentiousness," and in December of 1843 another petition was prepared "asking that some adequate punishment be made legal for the Seducer."[75] As a result of petitions presented from all over the state *A BILL to suppress crimes against chastity* was introduced in the Ohio legislature providing, "That any man or woman who shall live and cohabit in a state of adultery, shall be deemed guilty of a crime, and on conviction thereof shall, each, be imprisoned in the penitentiary, and kept at hard labor, for a term not exceeding three years, nor less than one year, . . ." Seducers were to be punished by a prison term of six months to three years and the publisher of obscene books and pictures punished by a fine. Despite the petitions from over four thousand lady reformers of Ohio the bill was killed by an unfavorable report from the Committee on the Judiciary in the Senate. The effort was more successful in some other states.[76]

Horace C. Taylor, the editor of the *Oberlin Evangelist,* had been enthusiastic for the Seventh Commandment Cause as a student in Western Reserve and in Oberlin. He now made the

[73]MS Minutes of the Dialectic Association, July 22, 1840; of the Young Men's Lyceum, Oct. 26, 1852, and Apr. 12, 1859; of the Phi Delta Society, Nov. 13, 1861.

[74]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Mar. 12, 1856; Classmate to Minerva A. Winegar, June 26, 1864 (lent by Mrs. Robert W. Allen), and the *Lorain County News,* June 7, 1865.

[75]Minutes, Jan., 1842, and Dec. 19, 1843.

[76]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Mar. 1, 29, and Apr. 26, 1843.

*Evangelist* an organ of the movement. When a new legislature met in December of 1843 he urged the sending of new petitions urging "the enactment of a law to punish libertines." He felt that it was "high time to give some legal protection to virtue."[77] At the time of the publication of this plea its author had been living in adultery with a young woman of his household for a matter of years. Within a few weeks he confessed to seduction and the procuring of an abortion in order to conceal his crime. He was dropped from the *Evangelist* and his offices in the Institute, excommunicated from the Church, and imprisoned for one year. But the damage which he had done to the cause of moral reform, with which his name was publicly identified, could not be repaired by this punishment. Associated as it was with the similar fall of other reformers (which the psychologists may explain), it dealt the movement a blow from which it did not soon recover.[78]

There were serious and startling defections from the New York society. Mrs. William Green, as we have seen, was associated with Mrs. Finney in the founding of the New York Female Moral Reform Society. George Cragin was publishing agent of the society, in charge of the publication of the *Advocate of Moral Reform;* he was also an agent for the collection of funds for the hardpressed Oberlin Institute. In 1838 Mrs. Green, and in 1839, Cragin, went over from puritanical moral reform to the sexual experiment of John Humphrey Noyes, the experiment which was later to grow into the Oneida Community! Mary Cragin, converted to the new movement sometime before her husband, wrote to the Perfectionist prophet: "Ah, bro. Noyes, how have the mighty fallen. In him you will find a most rigidly upright character—Grahamism, and Oberlin perfection all in ruins. How he clung to Oberlin, as with a death-grasp! . . . The Lord has pulled down strong towers. Bless the Lord—on the first of December he will be without money and without business. How this rejoices me!"[79] In 1845 and 1846 there took place a violent schism in the national society. Mrs. Sarah T. (Smith) Martyn

[77]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Dec. 6, 1843.

[78]*Ibid.,* Dec. 20, 1843, Jan. 3, and Feb. 28, 1844, and the Oberlin Church, MS Records, Dec., 1843. The licentious conduct of the pastor of the Brooklyn Free Church, revealed at about the same time, is another example.—Lewis Tappan to C. G. Finney, Feb. 1, 1844 (Tappan Letter Books).

[79]From R. A. Parker, *A Yankee Saint, John Humphrey Noyes and the Oneida Community* (New York—1935), 69–78. Courtesy of G. P. Putnam's Sons. The Oberlin circular dated June 10, 1839, lists Cragin as an agent.

left the fold and started the *White Banner* as a rival to the *Advocate*. Despite Oberlin's attachment for Mrs. Martyn the local ladies adhered to the old society and continued to subscribe to the *Advocate*. They even sent a special contribution of $24 to help tide the parent organization over this crisis.[80]

The moral reform crusade was now declining from its zenith. The loss of Mrs. Green, the Cragins and Mrs. Martyn was serious. Many others had also dropped out as a result of the "rumpus"; the fall of Taylor and other hypocrites was extremely damaging. The *Advocate of Moral Reform and Family Guardian,* as it became in 1848, discontinued the arresting and irritating assault upon immorality. Its tone became notably milder and it assumed eventually the character of a pious and moral magazine for the family circle. The energies of the society were largely diverted to the support of the home for "destitute, *respectable* females, without employment, friends, or home," called the "House of Industry and Home for the Friendless."[81] The moral education of children continued to be much emphasized. Finally, the transformation of the movement was completed by the dropping of the words "Moral Reform" from the title of the periodical (it becoming the *Advocate and Guardian*) and the change in the name of the parent society to the American Female Guardian Society.[82]

Oberlin remained loyal to the cause through these changes. The Oberlin Female Moral Reform Society, the Church and individuals contributed money and clothing to the House of Industry, and the subscriptions to the *Advocate* increased in number. In one issue of that periodical in 1848, $50 was acknowledged from Oberlin. In the same year Mrs. Dascomb visited the House of Industry and gave an account of it to the Oberlin society. Ten years later the national society's agent, or "home children's missionary," visited Oberlin, bringing a group of poor New York boys with her. On the afternoon and evening of the Sabbath, President Finney relinquished the pulpit to her.[83]

[80]Oberlin Female Moral Reform Society, MS Minutes, Sept. 16, 1845, and the *Advocate of Moral Reform,* Feb. 2, 1846.

[81]Bertha-Monica Stearns, *Loc. Cit.,* 638–684, and *Advocate of Moral Reform and Family Guardian,* XV, 2 (Jan. 1, 1849).

[82]*Advocate and Family Guardian,* XXI, 5–6 (Jan. 1, 1855), and XXV, 179 (June 1, 1859).

[83]*Ibid.,* XIV, 112 (July 15, 1848); Mary Atkins in *Ibid.,* XIV, 183 (Dec. 1, 1848), and XXIV, 200–201 (Sept. 1, 1858).

Though the Oberlin society declined and then entirely disappeared in the late fifties, the people of Oberlin did not cease to support the movement. The Oberlin Ladies' Benevolent Society contributed a barrel of clothing, and a Thanksgiving collection of $25 taken up in the Oberlin Church was donated in the winter of 1858–59. The next year "a barrel of clothing containing also a bed quilt from Anna Penfield," etc—was sent by the Benevolent Society and this was repeated in 1862. One entire collection from the Oberlin Church was usually donated every year. In 1864 a special social was held to collect money for the House of Industry. Twenty dollars was raised.[84] By this date however the moral reform movement had ceased to exist, being metamorphosed into a system of charity for the poor in the cities.

[84] *Ibid.*, XXV, 34–35 (Jan. 15, 1859); 382 (Dec. 15, 1859); XVIII, 68 (Feb. 15, 1862); XXVI, 19 (Jan. 1, 1861); XXVIII, 371 (Dec. 2, 1861); XXVIII, 51 (Feb. 1, 1862); XXX, 26 (Jan. 16, 1864), and 46 (Feb. 16, 1864).

## CHAPTER XXII

# *"PHYSIOLOGICAL REFORM"*

## *The Health Movement*

ONE of the first books in the library of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute was Dr. Edward Hitchcock's *Dyspepsy Forestalled & Resisted,* a series of lectures delivered before the students of Amherst in the spring of 1830 by the Professor of Chemistry and Natural History, later President, of Amherst. It was acquired early in January of 1836 and Philo P. Stewart drew it out twice in April of that year.[1] Hitchcock's book is but one item in the extensive literature intended to enlighten the laymen of the time on personal hygiene, and aid in the prevention of disease. He urged a limited and selected diet, opposed all alcoholic beverages and narcotics, emphasized the importance of regular exercise, and recommended fresh air, cleanliness, sufficient sleep, correct posture. Hitchcock freely acknowledged his indebtedness to Dr. George Cheyne, the Scotch writer of popular medical books of the middle eighteenth century. Cheyne advocated vegetarian diet and mineral and other baths in his *Natural Method of Cureing the Diseases of the Body,* published at London in 1742 and dedicated to Lord Chesterfield.[2] Two Scotch brothers of the nineteenth century were destined to be even more influential in teaching Americans better habits. These were George and Andrew Combe,

[1]Edward Hitchcock, *Dyspepsy Forestalled & Resisted: or Lectures on Diet, Regimen, & Employment: Delivered to the Students of Amherst College; Spring Term, 1830* (Amherst—1830); MS Record of Books Drawn from O. C. I. Library, No. 1, page 20, and *D. A. B.* Much of the material in this chapter has been previously published by the author under the title "Bread and Doctrine at Oberlin," in the *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly,* XLIX, 58–67 (Jan.—Mar. 1940).

[2]*D. N. B.,* and George Cheyne, *The Natural Method of Cureing the Diseases of the Body and the Disorder of the Mind Depending on the Body* (London—1742). The copy in the Oberlin Library originally belonged to Judge Benjamin Lynde (the magistrate in the Boston Massacre Case), was given by him to his grandson, Benjamin Lynde Oliver, and later became the property of Dr. William A. Alcott, the health reformer.

the publishers of the *Phrenological Journal.* George's *Constitution of Man* and Andrew's *Principles of Physiology* were tremendously popular both in America and in England.[3] Of course their writings are tainted with the phrenology illusion but they contain many sound maxims, nevertheless. American health reformers cited the Combes as theologians cite the Bible.

In America an important work in spreading knowledge of good hygiene was done by two semi-popular medical journals: the *Boston Medical Intelligencer* and the *Journal of Health* of Philadelphia. In the last two years of its life (1826–28) the *Intelligencer* was addressed rather to the public than to the medical profession, aiming at "promoting health, and preventing disease generally."[4] It contained attacks on intemperance of all kinds and articles on the care of babies and on proper diet and its preparation, and recommended frequent bathing and active exercise in the open air. The *Journal of Health* ("conducted by an association of Physicians") was published in Philadelphia from September, 1829, to August, 1833, and anticipated many of the rules of health later advocated by Sylvester Graham. Feather beds and corsets were denounced. All were exhorted to limit themselves to one dish at a meal. There is even a recipe for bran bread in the issue for March 10, 1830.[5]

This was an excellent educational program but it made little headway. It required the recognition of the care of the body as a moral duty and the crusading spirit of zealots like Drs. Sylvester Graham and William A. Alcott to make the health movement into a true reform. Was not gluttony as much of a sin as drunkenness? Was not cleanliness next to Godliness? The American people were tremendous meat eaters, five or six or even as many as thirty kinds of flesh and fish sometimes being served at one meal! The quantity of meat consumed at a sitting is really more awe-inspiring than the amount of drink absorbed. Men in the cities and women everywhere seldom took any regular exercise. The bathtub had not yet become an American institution.

[3] *D. N. B.;* Andrew Combe, *The Principle of Physiology Applied to the Preservation of Health, and to the Improvement of Physical and Mental Education* (1834 and later) originally published in England in 1834, and George Combe, *The Constitution of Man, Considered in Relation to External Objects* (1828 and many later editions).

[4] *Boston Medical Intelligencer,* IV, 161–162 (Oct. 3, 1826).

[5] *The Journal of Health,* I, 1–2 (Sept. 9, 1829), 107–109, 117–118 (Dec. 9, 1829), 192 (Feb. 24, 1830), 206–207 (Mar. 10, 1830).

Harriet Martineau found baths a rarity in private houses, though the demand for soap and water had generally increased as a result partly of the publication of several editions of Combe's *Principles of Physiology*.[6] If the Millennium was to be realized in the United States here was another important field of labor.

Sylvester Graham became General Agent for the Pennsylvania Temperance Society in 1830 and immediately began a series of lectures on the dangers of intemperance of all kinds. He concluded that alcoholic intemperance was no more dangerous than intemperance in eating and that he had a call to lead a new reform. The cholera epidemic of 1832 interested people more than usual in the problem of hygiene and the prevention of disease, and Graham's lectures on how to escape this scourge gave him a strong hold on the public mind. Disciples appeared wherever he lectured, and "Ladies' Physiological Reform" societies were formed in various towns and cities in New York and New England.[7] Graham's lectures in Boston led to the foundation there of the American Physiological Society in 1837. The object of the society was declared to be "to acquire and diffuse a knowledge of the laws of life, and of the means of promoting human health and longevity." Willard Sears, friend of Finney and Oberlin trustee, was on the executive committee. Dr. William A. Alcott was the first president and leading spirit. David Cambell, the landlord of the Graham boarding house in Boston, was corresponding secretary. By the end of the year this organization boasted over two hundred members, and over twice as many in 1838. Samuel Read Hall, first president-elect of the Oberlin Institute, and Amasa Walker, later Professor of Political Economy and member of the Board of Trustees at Oberlin, lent their influence to the work of the society. In 1838 Walker became a vice-president. Regular meetings were held and a number of tracts and lectures were published throughout 1837 and 1838.[8]

Dr. Alcott, a cousin of Bronson Alcott, and trained as a physician at Yale, was hardly less enthusiastic and prominent in the cause than Graham. As early as 1835 Alcott had established his

[6]R. H. Shryock, "Sylvester Graham and the Popular Health Movement, 1830–1870" in the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review,* XVIII, 172–183 (Sept. 1931); and Harriet Martineau, *Society in America,* (London—1839), III, 151–153.

[7]*D. A. B.;* Shryock, *Loc. Cit.,* 172–175, and the *Genius of Temperance,* May 25. 1831.

[8]*Publications* of the American Physiological Society (Boston—1837 and 1838).

*Moral Reformer, and Teacher on the Human Constitution* at Boston, a monthly periodical devoted to "Health and Physical Education."[9] It contained articles on physiology, temperance, diet, bathing and a favorable notice of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute in far away Ohio. In 1837 David Cambell began to edit, also at Boston, the *Graham Journal of Health and Longevity*—"designed to illustrate by facts, and sustain by reason and principles the science of human life as taught by Sylvester Graham."[10] In 1840, when Cambell left Boston for Oberlin, the *Moral Reformer* and *Graham Journal* were merged in the *Library of Health* under the editorship of Alcott.

Graham's ponderous two-volume *Lectures on the Science of Human Life* was the Bible of the Physiological reformers. His *Treatise on Bread-Making* was perhaps even more widely read. Dr. Alcott contributed many volumes, including: *Vegetable Diet, The House I Live In, The Young Wife, The Young Mother, The Young Man's Guide,* and *The Young House-Keeper.*

Oberlin, as usual, was in the van. Shipherd, Stewart, Mahan, and Finney were all Grahamites. When Shipherd was away on financial missions he felt that he suffered intensely if unable to get a Graham diet.[11] In 1841 he expressed the opinion in a letter to his brother "that another precursor of holiness will be a greater reform from gluttony & epicureanism." Finney was a strict Grahamite for several years.[12] Stewart was always a dyspeptic, and a vegetarian to his death. The colonists agreed in the Covenant of 1832 and 1833 to eat "only plain & wholesome food" and renounced tobacco, and "all strong & unnecessary drinks, even tea & coffee as far as practicable." In 1834 it was provided by the rules of the Institute that board should be "of a plain & holesome kind." Each meal was limited to "one dish with its accompaniments." "Tea & Coffee, high seasoned meats, rich pastries & all unholsome & expensive food" were excluded from the common table.[13] Physiology was made a required course. Shipherd considered "Biblical Instruction, & Physiology, in-

[9]*D. A. B.* The *Moral Reformer* was published in Boston from 1835 through 1839.

[10]A complete file of the *Graham Journal* is in the Oberlin College Library.

[11]J. J. Shipherd to Burnell, Aug. 16, 1838 (Treas. Off., File H), and Shipherd to N. P. Fletcher, Jan. 27, 1835 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

[12]J. J. Shipherd to Fayette S., Oct. 16, 1841 (Shipherd MSS), and the *Oberlin Evangelist,* Apr. 23, 1845.

[13]The 1834 Rules are in the Miscellaneous Archives.

cluding Manual Labor" the most important departments in the school. In July of 1836 the trustees ordered the Secretary to invite Graham, himself, to lecture in Oberlin. Late in the previous year the "Female Society of Oberlin for the Promotion of Health" was founded. "Believing that the usual dress and diet of females retards their physical, intellectual and spiritual improvement," runs the preamble to their constitution, "and that we are bound to conform to right principles ourselves and to do all we can to induce others to adopt them, we form ourselves into a society."[14] Three or four years later the men of the colony and Institute formed the Oberlin Physiological Society, the object of which was declared to be "to acquire and diffuse a knowledge of the laws of life, and the means of promoting health and longevity." Mahan was president; Shipherd was one of the vice-presidents; a student was recording secretary; and the executive committee consisted of Finney, Henry Cowles, Dr. Dascomb and Dr. Jennings. In June of 1837 a regular agent of the *Graham Journal* was appointed for Oberlin.[15] In February of 1839 President Mahan addressed the American Physiological Society in the Marlboro Chapel in Boston on the "Intimate Relations Between Moral, Mental and Physical Law," and reported informally on conditions at Oberlin. "Tea and coffee," he told the Bostonians, "are excluded from almost every family in the place; flesh meat is seldom eaten. . . . All condiments and seasonings are laid aside. Due regard is paid to dress, exercise, etc. Sickness is rarely known in the place. . . ."[16] At the health convention held in New York in June of 1839 George Whipple and William Dawes were present as delegates from Oberlin, and Whipple addressed the meeting at some length. Lewis Tappan, William Chapin of Providence, Amasa Walker, and other friends of Oberlin also took part.[17]

In 1840 Dr. Alcott spent ten days in Oberlin and delivered an address to the Oberlin Female Moral Reform Society on "dress, diet, marriage," etc. He was so favorably impressed with the attitude of Oberlinites toward the health movement that he seriously considered removing to Oberlin from Boston and

[14]J. J. Shipherd to H. Hill, Aug. 17, 1844 (Treas. Off., File O); T. M., July 6, 1836, and *New York Evangelist,* Jan. 16, 1836.
[15]*Graham Journal,* III, 326 (Sept. 28, 1839), and I, 96 (June 20, 1837).
[16]*Ibid.,* III, 153, 158 (May 11, 1839).
[17]*Ibid.,* III, 185, 192–194, and 199 (June 8, 1839).

"setting up [in Oberlin] a Journal of Physical Education (using that term in the larger sense) of the same size, price, etc. of the Oberlin Evangelist."[18] Young James Harris Fairchild, however, was somewhat critical of Alcott. He wrote to his future wife: "The celebrated Dr. Alcott of Boston made us a visit a few days since & gave us a smack of his doctrine. I am not entirely certain but he may hold some truth—but if it has no abler advocate than himself the world will eat beef-steak & baked potatoes for some centuries to come."[19] But Fairchild varied from the Oberlin norm on the conservative side. Most Oberlinites accepted the radical health program.

Graham's teachings may be summarized under twelve main heads:

1. Clothing should be adequate but not too warm and never tight.

2. All ought to sleep about seven hours a day, preferably from 10 P.M. to 5 A.M., but never after meals. Feather beds were considered highly injurious and "comfortables" objectionable. Sleeping apartments should be ventilated.

3. Bathing in warm or cold water was highly recommended—even in winter!

*As to diet:*

4. Wine, cider, beer, tobacco, tea, coffee, and all other stimulants were prohibited to all Grahamites. Soft water alone was to be drunk at meals.

5. "The chief food should be vegetables and fruit, to be eaten in as near their natural state as possible." Meat and fish were discountenanced.

6. Bread of unbolted wheat was recommended as the chief element in the diet. Rye, Indian corn, rice, sago, and tapioca were also recommended "if plainly cooked."

7. "Fats or gravies of any kind" were prohibited. Good cream was recommended as a substitute for butter or "Graham butter" made of milk and flour might be used.

8. No pastries or sweets other than honey and maple syrup were allowed. Pies made of unbolted wheat or cornmeal were excepted.

[18]Minutes of the Society, May—1840, and William A. Alcott to Gerrit Smith, June 30, 1840 (Gerrit Smith MSS).

[19]J. H. F. to Mary Kellogg, June 2, 1840 (Fairchild MSS).

9. No condiments such as pepper, mustard, oil, vinegar, etc. were to be used.

10. None should overeat and all must eat slowly and masticate their food thoroughly.

And finally

11. The taking of medicine was frowned upon, abstinence from food being recommended as a curative, and

12. Regular exercise in the open air was insisted upon as essential to health.[20]

Oberlin strove to live up to the code at every point. The colonists in the covenant pledged themselves to renounce "tight dressing." The constitution of the Female Society of Oberlin for the Promotion of Health provided that all members must "abstain from all modes of dress that are injurious to health, such as exposing the feet by wearing thin hose and shoes in cold or wet weather, compressing the chest and preventing the full expansion of the lungs, especially by lacing and tight dressing."[21] At first all young ladies in the Institute were required to wear flannel dresses if they possessed any. The original rules of 1834 required the students to "keep their beds from 10 O'Clock P.M. to 5 O'Clock A.M." Davis Prudden brought a feather bed with him, but his classmates told him it was "wrong to sleep on one as it injures the health & makes one puny & sickly." He suspected, however, that they wanted it for themselves.[22] There seems to have been no absolute prohibition upon feather beds at Oberlin, though in the Graham boarding houses in New York and Boston boarders were forbidden to "sleep on a feather bed during any part of the year" but on a bed of "hair, moss, or straw . . . or any thing harder if he chooses." Bathing was generally believed in at Oberlin, though the equipment of the boarding houses for this purpose was certainly not very satisfactory. David Cambell wanted to have a new dormitory built at Oberlin which should contain regular "bathing apartments."[23]

At first Mr. and Mrs. Stewart, with the occasional advice of faculty members such as Dr. Dascomb and Professor Finney, reg-

[20]The best brief statement is in the *Graham Journal* (Apr. 18, 1837), I, 17. See also *Nature's Own Book* (New York—1835).

[21]*New York Evangelist,* Jan. 16, 1836.

[22]Davis to Geo. P. Prudden, Dec. 10–13, 1836 (Prudden MSS).

[23]*Nature's Own Book,* 15, and David Cambell to Levi Burnell, Aug. 12, 1839 (Treas. Off., File L).

ulated the diet in the boarding house. After the Stewarts' departure in 1836 the management was turned over to a joint student-faculty committee. There was a general feeling throughout this period that the diet furnished, though sparse, was not orthodox according to Graham. To correct this deficiency David Cambell, editor of the *Graham Journal,* was invited to give up that publication and introduce complete Grahamism in Oberlin.

David Cambell was born among the granite hills of New Hampshire. About 1835 he was persuaded that Grahamism was the true way of life and took it up enthusiastically, giving up meat, tea and coffee, though he was very fond of them. Mrs. Elisa Cambell, a dyspeptic, was also converted and her health materially improved as a result. They plunged energetically into the movement, Mr. Cambell, as we have seen, becoming secretary of the American Physiological Society. They also established a Graham boarding house at their home at 23 Brattle Street in Boston, where vegetarian diet and whole-wheat bread could be secured by Grahamite transients.[24] Here the rules laid down by Sylvester Graham for his New York boarding house in 1832 and later published in *Nature's Own Book* were followed out in detail. The Cambells' establishment was the first Graham House in Boston. From April, 1837, through December, 1840, he also edited the *Graham Journal.* No one could have been better equipped to put Grahamism into effect in Oberlin. For a short time even, Cambell had been steward in a boarding school, the "Mount Pleasant Classical Institution" at Amherst, but left because the school was not thoroughly impregnated with the reform spirit.[25]

Cambell was enthusiastic about the opportunity to come to Oberlin, which he declared he looked upon as "a model Institution for the approaching Millenial Church." He was anxious to establish a "Boston Hall," a new boarding house, at Oberlin, which should be properly planned and equipped for the Graham

[24]*Graham Journal,* III, 345–347 (Oct. 26, 1839); III, 361–363 (Nov. 9, 1839), and I, 47–48 (May 9, 1837). The Graham House in New York City was a kind of headquarters for reformers. There you might expect to see the Tappans, Joshua Leavitt or William Goodell. *Cf.* Thomas H. LeDuc, "Grahamites and Garrisonites," *New York History* XX, 189–91 (Apr. 1939).

[25]David Cambell to Levi Burnell, Oct. 1, 1839 (Treas. Off., File L). Cambell was active in other reform movements. He was one of the Garrisonian delegates to the convention at Philadelphia in 1833 which resulted in the founding of the American Anti-Slavery Society, and he was a non-resistant pacifist.

regimen. With the aid of Willard Sears he undertook to raise money for it, unsuccessfully, however, on account of the hard times. He concluded to give up the *Graham Journal* but hoped to resume his work as a reform editor in some other connection after becoming settled in the new environment. The two Cambells caused no little excitement when they arrived in Oberlin in May of 1840, bringing a cask of rice, a cask of tapioca, a box of sago and a copy of *Nature's Own Book,* containing recipes for Graham bread, pumpkin bread, cracked wheat porridge, rice porridge, bread coffee, potato coffee and other reformed dishes![26]

Of course, no tea or coffee was served in the boarding house. Originally the prohibition in the Oberlin Covenant had extended also to chocolate but this was deleted in the draft finally signed. Horrible stories were told about the effects of tea. Professor Thome, in 1843, related in the *Oberlin Evangelist* the story of a shoemaker who drank twenty-two cups at one sitting and lapsed into unconsciousness shortly after. His life was saved only by timely medical aid![27] At the Second American Health Convention in New York in 1838 Professor Whipple of Oberlin told the harrowing tale of a young lady who drank some strong tea at a quilting. She went into convulsions and died. A physician who was called declared (so said the professor) that her "death was occasioned by drinking strong tea rapidly." There seem to have been always, however, some drinkers of tea and even coffee in Oberlin. Though in 1837 the colonists voted not to patronize any merchants who dispensed it, the wife of the Secretary-Treasurer of the Institute admitted that she and her husband imbibed from the social cup "when we feel that we need it."[28] Students, were more easily controlled and must get along at the boarding house table as best they could with crust coffee and rain water!

Meat eating was frowned upon. It was not only unhealthy and unnatural but, declared a writer in the *Graham Journal,* the

[26]David Cambell to Levi Burnell, Aug. 12, 1839, Feb. 25, Apr. 8, 1840 (Treas. Off., File L), and Sarah Ingersoll to parents, May 26, 1840 (lent by Mrs. Friedrich Lehmann). Cambell's personal copy of *Nature's Own Book,* bearing his signature on the flyleaf, is in the Oberlin Library.

[27]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Mar. 1, 1843.

[28]*Graham Journal,* III, 194 (June 8, 1839); P. P. and E. C. Stewart to J. J. Shipherd, May 25, 1833 (Treas. Off., File I), and A. W. Lothrop to Mrs. Levi Burnell, Jan. 19, 1837 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

eating of animal food tends "to produce ferocity of disposition."[29] Down to the coming of Cambell, however, meat could usually be obtained at the boarding house table by those who desired it. Mr. Cambell felt that he could "not conscientiously furnish flesh meat." The Prudential Committee arranged to have meat carried into the hall for such students as required it, but relieved "Bro and Sister Cambell from all responsibility or care of the same." The meat-eating students had to wait eleven months, while the committee reconsidered their action and the faculty were called in for advice, before the order was carried out and the meat actually appeared.[30] Fruit and vegetable foods, plainly prepared, were regularly served. Boiled rice, puddings, berries, potatoes, squash, beets, onions, rutabagas (not tomatoes for they were still believed to be poisonous), baked apples, boiled cracked wheat, "Johnecakes," and great quantities of indifferently good Graham bread appeared on the boarding house menu. The recipes in *Nature's Own Book* include Cracked Wheat Mush, Bread Pudding, Samp Pudding, Rye Mush, and, of course, Graham Bread. Milk, eggs, and cottage cheese were allowed, though of animal origin.[31] "Bread, milk, and fruit, or bread and porridge with fruit," wrote Graham, "are true and wholesome diet." Graham bread was a sort of religion with many. In 1839 an Oberlin 'coed' wrote enthusiastically home to her parents whom she expected soon to visit: "I want to have the privilege of baking as much as once for you, and I want you to provide a quantity [of] *first rate* Graham flour, that you may have *at least* one oven full of coarse food if no more. I know father will like it, and I think mother and the children will."[32] Perfectionism and anti-slavery were not the only doctrines spread by Oberlin.

"Butter, at best," ran the Graham boarding house rules, "is a questionable article, and should be very sparingly used by the healthy, and not at all by the diseased."[33] E. P. Ingersoll, formerly

[29]*Graham Journal*, III, 19–20 (Jan. 5, 1839).

[30]P. C. M., May 23, 1840; Mar. 31 and Apr. 14, 1841, and F. M., Apr. 2, 1841. Also David Cambell to Burnell, Feb. 12, 1841 (Treas. Off., File L). There is much evidence on the Cambell regime in the boarding house in the MS "Boarding House Book" in the O. C. Treasurer's Office.

[31]See below, Ch. XXXVII, "Plain & Holesome."

[32]Sarah P. Ingersoll to parents, July 9, 1839 (lent by Mrs. Friedrich Lehmann, Oberlin).

[33]*Nature's Own Book*, 16.

Professor of Sacred Music at Oberlin, wrote to the *Graham Journal* in 1837, telling how he conquered his appetite for butter, which he loved "as the drunkard does his brandy." Having finally won out against temptation he found that he was entirely cured of cankers in the mouth.[34]

Pastries, candies and all highly flavored foods were considered deleterious and all persons were warned against their use except in very moderate quantities. Pies and cakes were included in the Graham recipes but they were rather different from the articles usually called by those names. Piecrust, for example, was to be made by "sifting coarse flour, and taking hot, mealy potatoes, and rubbing them in as you would butter; then [taking] pearlash, and sour milk or water and wet[ting] it, rolling the crust if you please in fine flour."[35] The "monstrous" apple pie served occasionally in the boarding house with its thick upper and lower crusts was probably made in this way. As to cake, Graham declared: "Cake made of coarse wheaten meal, like gingerbread, (leaving out the ginger) wet with milk, without other shortening, can be made very palatable."[36] Very little sweetening was to be used in any case. Honey and maple sugar were to be preferred to refined cane sugar because in a more natural state. While in Oberlin, Cambell kept bees to produce honey for the boarding house. Students were prohibited from using at the table pepper or other condiments, even when purchased at their own expense. When Professor John P. Cowles, an unmarried teacher who took his meals at the boarding hall, brought a pepper shaker to the table it was ordered removed by the trustees. His subsequent dismissal was not unrelated to this offense![37] Such spices were believed to be irritating to the lining of the stomach and unduly stimulating to the passions.[38]

All students were expected to be temperate in the consumption of all foods—even of Graham bread and vegetables. In 1835 Mrs. Stewart granted one young lady student a rebate of 30 cents

[34]*Graham Journal,* I, 193–194 (Sept. 26, 1837).
[35]*Nature's Own Book,* 45–46.
[36]*Ibid.,* 43.
[37]David Cambell to H. Hill, June 10, 1842 (Treas. Off., File L), and J. P. Cowles to the Trustees, Nov. 23, 1839, published in the *Cleveland Observer,* Nov. 27, 1839.
[38]See the article on "Licentiousness' in the *Library of Health* V. 131–132 (Apr., 1841).

—"credit for abstemiousness"![39] At the height of the Cambell regime a young man wrote to his father that he was "absolutely hungry a good part of the time."[40] In earlier years some of the students lived for a while on a diet of bread and water or bread and salt. Grahamism taught that soft water was in itself really nourishing!

Many students were undoubtedly indifferent to the diet question, but some became enthusiastic advocates of the cause of physiological reform. A Quaker student, Pardon D. Hathaway, after eighteen months of Oberlin Grahamism, "using only two or three articles of food and those of the purely vegetable kind, without any condiments or seasoning whatever, even to the excluding of salt . . . using no other drink besides water" and bathing "every day, using a coarse towel and body-brush thoroughly," was ready to declare that the cause of physiological reform was "a cause which lays just claim to the aid of every Christian and philanthropist, and one which must prevail, as that day arrives when 'Lamentation and woe shall no more be heard in our borders,' and 'the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters do the sea.' " Another student declared that the Oberlin regimen had saved him—body, mind and soul. Previously life had become a complete burden to him; he was constantly attended by "a feeling of languor and dullness" and "could walk but a short distance, without intolerable weariness." His mental alertness and moral judgment also suffered "for physical, mental, and moral transgression, all go together."—Then he came to Oberlin and began taking daily baths and eating Graham bread. "My mind," he exulted, "immediately burst from its debasement and reassumed its pristine vigor. . . . My physical powers seem entirely new. Youth has returned again. . . . Cheerfulness has taken the place of despondency. Faith takes the place of darkness, and happiness of gloom and misery."[41]

Some accepted a sort of a half-way covenant of diet, and others opposed the reform regimen entirely. Hannah Warner told her parents: "I do not carry Grahamism very far. I eat lean meat, butter & all that you do except fat meat & spices. We drink no

[39] Summary of Mrs. Stewart's board bills, Mar. 4, 1835, in the Misc. Archives.
[40] James Sperry to C. G. Finney, Dec. 26, 1840 (Finney MSS).
[41] *Graham Journal*, III, 237–239 (July 20, 1839), and W. B. Orvis, in *Ibid.*, III, 396–397 (Dec. 14, 1839).

tea or coffee. I think a meat diet is better for me because it makes more blood & keeps the system in more vigorous action. I think too that bathing in cold water every morning in the winter brings the heat too much on the surface. Bathing twice a week I think is often enough in the morning in the winter. I think it is better not to eat anything between our regular meals." Her brother believed that his health was failing on account of the inadequate nourishment he was receiving "upon the grayham diet." He began boarding himself, eating butter and meat, etc. and concluded that he felt much better as a result.[42] Professor John P. Cowles declared that physiological reform at Oberlin went "beyant all the beyants entirely." He even charged the system with having caused the death of some of the "female" students. "But you," he accused the trustees, "have simplified simplicity, and reformed reformation, till not only the health and lives of many are in danger; but some, I fear, have already been physiologically reformed into eternity."[43]

Delazon Smith, Oberlin's most unrelenting critic, declared that the food at the boarding house was "State Prison Fare!" He was more explicit: "As for their water gruel, milk and water porrages, crust coffee, &c., they are really too filthy and contemptible to merit a comment. They are usually known among the students by their appropriate names, such as *Swill, starch, slosh, dishwater,* &c. &c. One of the above with an *apology* for bread, constitute the essentials of each meal." He held that "if students could not purchase other articles of food at the stores, tavern, &c., it would be utterly impossible for any of them to sustain their healths, if not their lives, or be obliged to leave these heights of zion." The people of the neighboring towns, he said, had become so well acquainted with the effects of Oberlin diet that they could identify a young man from Oberlin by his "leak, lean, lantern jawed visage!" Smith quotes an Oberlin poet as expressing the situation perfectly:

> Sirs, Finney and Graham first—'twere shame to think
> That you, starvation's monarchs, can be beaten;
> Who've proved that *drink* was never meant to *drink,*
> Nor *food* itself intended to be *eaten*—

[42]Warren and Hannah Warner to parents, Dec. 24, 1841, to Feb. 16, 1842 (O. C. Lib., gift of S. C. Huntington).
[43]*Cleveland Observer,* Nov. 27, 1839.

That Heaven provided for our use, instead,
The *sand* and *saw-dust* which compose our bread.

* * *

But why on us, pursue your cruel plan?
Oh why, condemn us thus to *bread* and *water*?
Perchance you reckon all the race of man,
As rogues and culprits who deserve no quarter;
And 'tis your part to punish, not to spare,
By putting us upon State Prison fare.

* * *

Our table treasures vanish one by one,
Beneath your wand, like Sancho's, they retire;
Now stakes [*sic*] are *rare*, and mutton chops are *done*,
Veal's in a *stew*, the fat is in the *fire*,
Fish, flesh and fowl are ravish'd in a trice—
Sirs Finney and Graham! cannot one suffice?

When wine was banished by your cruel fates,
Oh! gentle tea, for thee I trembled then;
"The cup which cheers but not inebriates,"
Not even thou must grace our boards again!
Imperial is *dethroned* as I forboded—
Bohea is *dish'd*, Gunpowder is exploded!

Venison is vile, a cup of coffee curst,
And food that's fried, or fricasseed, forgot;
Duck is destruction, wine of woes is worst,
Clams are condemned, and poultry's gone to pot;
Pudding and Pork are under prohibition,
*Mustard* is *murder*, *pepper* is *perdition*.

But dread you not, some *famished foe* may rise,
With vengeful arm, and beat you to a jelly?—
Ye robbers of our vitals' best supplies
Beware! "there is no joking with the belly,"
Nor hope the world will in your footsteps follow,
Your *bread* and *doctrine* are too hard to *swallow*.[44]

After all, however, Grahamism did not last long in Oberlin. In March of 1841 a group of Oberlin colonists called a mass

[44]Delazon Smith, *A History of Oberlin*.

meeting to protest against the continuation of the vegetable diet in the boarding hall. They believed, so read the notice calling for the meeting, "that the health of many of those who board there [at the Hall] is seriously injured . . . not only in consequence of a sudden change of diet, but also by the use of a diet which is inadequate to the demands of the human system as at present developed."[45] In April Cambell was forced by public opinion and private pressure to resign his position as steward. Despite this fact he remained a friend of Oberlin and declined to receive any salary for his year's work. For some time he continued to have hopes of building a Boston Hall at Oberlin, where those students who preferred the simple diet might have it. This he was never able to finance.[46] Probably some individuals in Oberlin continued to practice the Graham rules, but here as everywhere the Graham influence declined rapidly after 1840. In 1845 even Finney could repent of his former "bondage" to Grahamism and declare his belief that the proper rule of diet was to "prefer those things which are most consistent with and conducive to the best physical state of our bodies, not hesitating, however for conscience sake to eat such things as are set before us in our journeys and wanderings, provided they are not positively injurious."[47] Finney, in short, no longer looked upon diet as a moral question and, therefore, for him and for many others Grahamism had ceased to be *reform*. Oberlin students and colonists, wrote one disappointed reformer, "rushed with precipitous and confused haste back to their flesh pots; and here under the exhilerating and bewildering influence of fresh infusions of the chinese shrub and the Mocha bean, with the riotous eating of swine's flesh and drinking the broth of abominable things, they succeeded in arresting a necessary renovating work."[48] The author of this statement, written in 1852, is unfair, however, for Oberlinites, and Americans generally, certainly lived more intelligently and more temperately because of the

[45]MS Notice, dated Mar. 20, 1841, signed by 15 colonists including G. Fairchild, T. P. Turner, N. P. Fletcher, L. Holtslander, etc. (in O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

[46]P. C. M., Apr. 14, 1841, and June 15, 1841; T. M., Aug. 20, 1841, and David Cambell to H. Hill, June 10, 1842 (Treas. Off., File L). Mrs. Cambell continued to do some teaching in the Prep. Dept.—*Cf.* Bill for teaching, Sept. 15, 1841 (Misc. Archives).

[47]"Letter from Prof. Finney to Miss A. E. of Vermont . . . No. 4," *Oberlin Evangelist*, Apr. 23, 1845.

[48]Isaac Jennings, *The Philosophy of Human Life* (Cleveland—1852), 241–242.

popular study of physiology and the attention to hygiene which the movement had stimulated.

Some of the most enthusiastic would not give up the cause, and in 1850 they formed the American Vegetarian Society with Dr. Alcott as president and Sylvester Graham and P. P. Stewart among the vice-presidents. As the name of the organization would imply, its purpose was somewhat more limited than that of the earlier American Physiological Society, being devoted to the development of "habits of Abstinence from the Flesh of Animals as food."[49] Oberlin did not participate. In 1854 Dr. Alcott wrote to Henry Cowles, then editor of the *Oberlin Evangelist:* "My heart fails me, this morning on receiving your letter. . . . That I must give up Oberlin,—and such men as Finney & you with it, is inexpressibly painful." "Most glad am I," he wrote in the same letter, "of your disdain in regard to tobacco & tea & coffee—and feather beds. I wish it could have been extended to animal food, pastries & condiments."[50] In 1860 Stewart, who had left Oberlin in 1836 and was then engaged at Troy in the stove business, returned and delivered a lecture on diet in the College Chapel. His audience, however much it may have been entertained by his discourse, seems not to have been moved at all.[51]

With their emphasis on prevention by right-living it is not surprising that some Grahamites should have come to believe and teach that medicine was unnecessary. In fact, drugs, they declared, were as harmful as coffee, alcohol or pepper. The physician was the human race's worst enemy.

Down to recent years, it has almost always been true that the public was generally suspicious of physicians. Besides, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries some undoubtedly did more harm than good with their mercury and venesections. Oberlin's own Dr. Dascomb prescribed calomel rather often.[52] All over the world unorthodox schools of medicine had flourished since the middle of the eighteenth century: homeopathy, "Thomsonianism," and hydropathy. The Americans, with their belief in free inquiry and free action—complete democracy—welcomed them as a relief from the long tyranny of orthodox physicians.

[49]American Vegetarian Society, *Circular,* July 9, 1850 (Cowles-Little MSS).
[50]W. A. Alcott to Henry Cowles, Aug. 21, 1854 (Cowles-Little MSS).
[51]*Lorain County News,* June 27, 1860.
[52]Dr. Dascomb's MS Account Book, 1834–35 (O. C. Lib.)

A new medical theory was fairly certain of a warm reception, for a while, at least.[53] Dr. Isaac Jennings was Oberlin's medical reformer.

Dr. Jennings was born at Fairfield, Connecticut, in 1788. In 1809 and the years following he studied medicine in the office of Eli Ives, M. D., at New Haven, there being at that time no regular medical school in the state. After the medical department at Yale was established he was granted an honorary M.D. by that institution. For a number of years he engaged in a normal medical practice in the towns of Trumbull and Derby, but sometime in the twenties he came to the conclusion that drugs and bleeding were positively harmful and ceased to use them. For a while he continued this "no-medicine" practice at Derby, recommending vegetable diet, bathing, and abstinence from stimulants. Sometimes he gave a bread pill or a dose of colored water when the patient insisted on having some kind of a dose.[54] At first he seems to have attracted little attention, and he did not try to publicize his work. In the late twenties he began to be known abroad and to lose his practice at home. In 1838 he was invited to the annual meeting of the American Physiological Society and to the American Health Convention, both held that year in Boston.[55] In 1837 he sold his office and library at Derby and visited Oberlin for the first time.

His address before the Oberlin Maternal Association might have been delivered by any Grahamite. He discussed "the importance of non-conformity to the customs of the world, in regard to dress, tight-lacing etc." and declared the "use of tea & coffee" to be "not only unnecessary but injurious & a great sin in the church."[56] The vote of the Oberlin Society at that time against the sale of tea and coffee may very likely have been passed through his influence. His speech to the students of the Institute, however, dealt with his pet doctrine. A young lady student, who heard it,

[53]Richard H. Shryock, "Public Relations of the Medical Profession in Great Britain and the United States: 1600–1870," *Annals of Medical History*, II, 308–339.

[54]Samuel Orcutt and Ambrose Beardsley, *The History of the Old Town of Derby, Connecticut, 1642—1880* (Springfield, Mass.—1880), 601–603, and W. H. Jennings, *A Genealogical History of the Jennings Family in England and America*, 2 vols. (Columbus, Ohio—1899), 427.

[55]American Physiological Society, *Second Annual Report* (Boston—1838), 11–12 and 37–38.

[56]Oberlin Maternal Association, MS Minutes, May 16, 1837.

wrote home to her brother: "Dr. Jennings lectured to us last evening about Medicines used in sickness—he seems to disapprove of them altogether. He mentioned the case of a Lady afflicted with the typhus fever, he visited her morning and evening for a day or two and did all he could to relieve her. I do not recollect what he prescribed for her but she got no better, she was very restless and sick, and could keep nothing on her stomach except cold water. He was deeply affected by her case and when he left her he walked the fields and tried to think what he could do for her, he at last came to a clear pure spring of water and took a vial from his pocket emptied it—rinsed it, and then filled it with Aqua fontana pura and returned to the house and told his patient to take just four drops from the vial (which he had filled at the spring) once in four hours, and to take nothing else. Next morning he called again and found that after taking the drops she had been much better, he told her to continue taking them, she did so, and soon recovered. This, with many similar cases seemed to prove his doctrine very conclusively. He lectures again this morning on the same subject."[57] Oberlin was converted (not Dr. Dascomb, of course), and Jennings was well pleased with the colony.[58] Two years later he joined them and became a member of the Board of Trustees and the Prudential Committee of the Institute.

Professor Finney and Father Shipherd were closely associated with Dr. Jennings from the beginning. Finney publicly opposed the use of medicine nearly a year before Jennings came to Oberlin. Whether he had come under the influence of Jennings elsewhere or had arrived at the same conclusions independently *via* the Graham route is now impossible to say. Anyway, in July of 1836 we find the evangelist lecturing the students on preserving health and "condemning almost the whole class of physicians, who instead of trying to prevent disease . . . go about & give this pill to one man & another to another man, without knowing whether it will kill or cure."[59] In 1841 Shipherd wrote to his brother with regard to Jennings: "His Lectures are of far more worth than the advice & medicines of other Doctors & I hope his labors of love will bring him needed support. While people will

[57]Nancy Prudden to George Prudden, May 16, 1837 (Prudden MSS).

[58]Isaac Jennings, *The Tree of Life; or, Human Degeneracy; Its Nature and Remedy, as Based on the Elevating Principle of Orthopathy* (New York—1867), ix and 51.

[59]Davis Prudden to Peter Prudden, Aug. 3, 1836 (Prudden-Allen MSS).

walk after the flesh fulfilling its lusts they must be sick; but the grace of God is wonderfully manifest in the recuperative power which He has given nature by which diseases are thrown off without medicines more surely & safely to the patient than with them. . . . I consider Doct. Jennings & his Theory & practice of Hygiene as harbingers of the Millenium. Fail not my Brother to understand & aid him."[60] It is not surprising, therefore, that it should have been these three—Jennings, Finney and Shipherd—who were appointed as a sub-committee of the Prudential Committee in 1840 to "enquire & report upon the question: whether there is any local or assignable cause for the frequent occurence of cases of determination of blood to the brain or affection of the head among persons engaged in intensive intellectual labor."[61] They were the leading exponents of medical reform in Oberlin.

Dr. Jennings' school of bodily cure was known as orthopathy, "no-medicine," or "new practice." Nature, he said, was always doing her best to keep the human system in health and vigor. All that mortal could do was to give the patient rest and provide the "vital forces" the best opportunity to carry on the battle. The temperature of the room ought to be controlled. The demands of the patient for water, etc., should be promptly supplied. But, above all, the system was not to be disturbed by unusual demands; especially were physic, bleeding, and stimulants barred. The "vital powers" he held, could not be aided by medicine. In fact, he declared, "the whole system of stimulation and medication is a gross and awful delusion, . . . Joab-ic treachery, outwardly a kiss, but inwardly a plunge of a dagger deep under the fifth rib." "On the contrary there is good reason to believe," he wrote in the *Medical and Scientific Examiner,* "that the best method of obtaining a recruit of the vital forces . . . is to keep quiet, take a kindly care of the body, and then leave the mustering, marshaling and entire disposition of the forces to an unrestricted operation of natural law."[62]

The homeopaths gave only minute doses of drugs; the hydropaths prescribed only water; Dr. Jennings' theories were in close accord with the teachings of most medical reformers of the day. Dr. William Alcott, as early as 1841, expressed in his *Library*

[60]J. J. Shipherd to Fayette Shipherd, Oct. 16, 1841 (Shipherd MSS).

[61]P. C. M., Apr. 24, 1840. David Cambell was later added to this committee. P. C. M., June 17, 1840.

[62]Quoted in the *Oberlin Evangelist,* July 20, Aug. 2 and 13, 1848.

*of Health* his curiosity to know more of orthopathy and called on Jennings to expound it to the public.[63] To meet this demand the latter published at Oberlin in 1847 his book on *Medical Reform* with the subtitle, *A Treatise on Man's Physical Being and Disorders, Embracing an Outline of a Theory of Human Life and a Theory of Disease—Its Nature, Cause, and Remedy.* The relation of orthopathy to Grahamism is clearly shown in the chapter on causes of disease in this work. The chief causes as listed are: alcohol, tea and coffee, tobacco, animal food, butter and cheese, tight-lacing, defective education, ungoverned passions and contagions. His theory of the nature and proper treatment of disease (or "impaired health") is, of course, developed in great detail. He uses the term heteropathy to describe the usual medical practice in contrast to orthopathy, as the homeopaths applied the term allopathy to all non-homeopathic practice. Dr. Alcott and Professor Finney wrote brief notices of recommendation of the work, which were printed as a sort of preface. Dr. Alcott declared his belief that the promulgation of Jennings' views "would do more, at the present crisis, to meliorate the condition of mankind, physically and morally, than . . . anything else, short of the everlasting gospel itself." Finney was equally enthusiastic in his commendation. "Having suffered much," he wrote, "from impaired health and medical treatment, and having conversed with numerous eminent physicians, I was struck with the fact that clouds and darkness rested upon their pathway; that they were agonized . . . with uncertainty at every step—hating empyrics, and yet obliged to be nothing else themselves. I said to myself the whole subject of medicine must need thorough revision if not utter subversion . . . The more I look at your fundamental principle, namely, that *disease is in no case wrong action or a positive entity,* but in all cases is only *impaired action resulting from a deficiency of vitality, and yet the best that is possible under the circumstances* . . . the more I find myself verging to the conclusion that this *must* be true." In that very year Finney had an opportunity to demonstrate his faith. In the typhoid epidemic of the summer of 1847 Jennings treated several patients, Finney among them. He was ill for over two months, during which time he received no drugs of any kind and

[63] *Library of Health,* V, 25–27 (Jan., 1841).

but very little food and that of the Graham variety, "crackers of unbolted wheat meal," gruel, pudding, boiled rice, and baked sweet apples. His recovery was looked upon by many as a triumph for orthopathy and Jennings wrote a long account, describing the case in some detail.[64]

Orthopathy, however, was not much more long-lived in Oberlin than Grahamism. As late as 1853 we find one of the literary societies debating the question whether "medical practice has been a curse to the world." But in the sixties Jennings was ready to declare that "the cloud of prejudice which has been raised in Oberlin on the questions of diet and medicine" had made the minds of Oberlinites "as impenetrable as the grisly hide of the rhinoceros." It was Dr. Dascomb, Jennings said, who was responsible for this state of things. Even in Oberlin, its home, orthopathy was dead, its inventor admitted. "No iron-clad monitor could more effectually ward off shell and shot than the people of Oberlin do the shafts of physiological and pathological truths."[65]

* * *

Historically the temperance movement was the parent of the "physiological reform" movement, as we have seen. If it was sinful to drink liquors harmful to the physical body, it followed that it was sinful to eat harmful foods, take poisonous drugs, wear tight or inadequate clothing, or neglect exercise, bathing or ventilation. By the same reasoning it is equally evident that temperance was *logically* merely one phase of the attempt to reform health habits by moral suasion.

At least since the preaching and publication of Lyman Beecher's *Six Sermons* in 1826 practically all liberal Presbyterians and Congregationalists (and some not so liberal) had subscribed to the cause of temperance. Oberlin's early sponsors were all advocates of temperance. Shipherd was very active in the interest of temperance while settled in Elyria. Theodore Weld interspersed temperance lectures among his addresses on behalf of manual labor and anti-slavery. Oberlinites, unlike most temperance men of the early thirties, were "teetotalers" from the beginning. In the Covenant they pledged themselves to abstain from

[64]*Oberlin Evangelist,* as cited above.

[65]Young Men's Lyceum, MS Minutes, Sept. 20, 1853, and Isaac Jennings, *The Tree of Life,* 50–51. In 1852, Jennings had also published *The Philosophy of Human Life,* etc. (Cleveland and Boston—1852). P. P. Stewart seems to have been a follower.—W. A. Alcott to Gerrit Smith, Jan. 3, 1854 (Gerrit Smith MSS).

"all strong & unnecessary drinks." The church took the same stand and agreed, in 1835, to use sweetened water at the Communion. Students were always forbidden the "use of intoxicating liquor for drink." When Oberlin men travelled they always put up at temperance houses, which could be found in most communities. There was an Oberlin Temperance Society as early as the summer of 1834,[66] and preachers and teachers educated at Oberlin taught temperance as if it were a fifth Gospel.[67] Nevertheless, temperance was not on a par with the other reform movements at Oberlin. Practically nobody in Oberlin needed to be reformed; all agreed on the desirability of temperance and only sporadically did interest in the subject develop sufficiently to stimulate organized activity in that field.

The first such period of special interest came in the early forties when the Washingtonians (a society of reformed drunkards) had stirred the whole nation with their spicy and effective methods of propaganda. In 1842 a Lorain County Washingtonian Society was formed, and the *Oberlin Evangelist* hailed the event as another step toward the Millennium.[68] When the second meeting of this society was held at Amherstville on August 2 of the same year, the delegation from Oberlin arrived in a procession of forty wagons and carriages led by the Oberlin band. The Oberlinites must have been honorary members. It is unimaginable that any of them had had the proper background for full membership! President Mahan offered the invocation; H. C. Taylor, fresh from his trial at Elyria for "lynching," was a member of the committee on resolutions; the Oberlin Musical Association furnished the singing.[69] In the following month Oberlin also sent a delegation to the Northern Ohio Washingtonian Convention held at Medina, "a noble gathering of men and women who were resolved to give battle to the monster Intemperance, till he is slain." The meeting was held in the Oberlin Tent, and a delegation from the Oberlin Young Ladies' Literary Society presented

[66]Oberlin Church, MS Records, Sept., 1835; By-Laws of 1834 (Misc. Archives); Bill in Misc. Archives: "Oberlin Temperance Society to O. C. Institute Dr. July 8—To 1 Blank Book—$0.40. Oberlin, July 23, 1834."

[67]"Thoughts on Temperance" in E. J. Comings MSS. In 1837 Amos Dresser was lecturing on temperance and anti-slavery and raising money for Oberlin at the same time. Dresser to Burnell, Nov. 29, 1837 (Treas. Off., File B).

[68]Mar. 16, 1842.

[69]*The Independent Treasury* (Elyria), Aug. 10, 1842, and *Oberlin Evangelist*, Aug. 17, 1842.

"a beautiful blue scarf" to Captain Turner, the Washingtonian leader.[70]

Temperance again appeared as a major interest in Oberlin in the early fifties when the work of Neal Dow in Maine had stimulated interest in state-wide prohibition. Oberlinites could not say too much in favor of the Maine law and joined enthusiastically with other Ohio temperance advocates in the effort to secure the passage of a similar law in that state. In 1851 a referendum was held on the question whether the system of licensing the sale of alcoholic beverages should be prohibited in the constitution. Oberlin was all in favor of abolishing the system which the *Evangelist* declared to be *"an unmitigated curse."* If intoxicating beverages were to be sold, at least the state ought not to be a partner in the criminal business! License was defeated by the close vote of 113,000 to 104,000.[71]

For the next three years after this minor victory an extensive campaign was waged by Ohio reformers for complete prohibition. In this campaign Oberlin played an active part. Enthusiastic state temperance conventions were held in Columbus in 1852, 1853, and 1854, the second being attended by Neal Dow, himself. All of these sessions were reported in full in the *Oberlin Evangelist,* that of 1852 by James Monroe, then a member of the Ohio legislature. An Ohio State Temperance Executive Committee and, later, an Ohio State Temperance Alliance, were organized to carry on the battle between conventions.[72]

In Oberlin, the young men students, the townsmen generally (including faculty members), and the women organized to help carry on the fight for the "Maine Law" for Ohio. In November of 1852 "The Oberlin Students' Temperance Society" was formed with the expressed purpose of preparing those engaged in winter teaching and preaching to act as advocates of the prohibitory law, circulating petitions and giving temperance addresses. They mutually promised each other as students of Oberlin College that they would exert themselves to the utmost "as we are laboring as teachers, to secure signatures to the 'Maine Law' petition, and in forming temperance societies and stimulat-

[70]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Aug. 17, Sept. 28, 1842, and the *Cleveland Herald,* Sept. 27, 1842, *Annals of Cleveland.*

[71]E. O. Randall and D. J. Ryan, *History of Ohio,* IV, 519, and *Oberlin Evangelist,* May 21 and June 18, 1851.

[72]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Mar. 17, 1852; July 6, 1853; Feb. 15, and Mar. 1, 1854.

ing public sentiment on the subject of temperance." It was at a meeting of this society, faculty and townsmen appearing as guests, that, in August of 1853, the agent of the Ohio State Executive Committee appeared, and a local committee of teachers, students, and colonists was appointed to collect funds and circulate petitions.[73] At the commencement exercises, a few weeks later, one of the theological graduates delivered "A Plea for the Maine Law."

But it was the women of Oberlin who took by far the most prominent part in the early prohibition movement. When the first Ohio State Women's Temperance Convention was held in Representatives' Hall in Columbus, January 13 and 14, 1853, Mrs. M. D. P. Cowles, second wife of Professor Henry Cowles of Oberlin, presided. Over a thousand men and women were in the audience as delegates or guests. A "State Temperance Society of the Women of Ohio" was formed and a petition sent to the legislature praying for the passage of a "Maine Law" for Ohio.[74] An auxiliary society was immediately formed in Oberlin with four hundred and fifty members. "We will pray, we will petition, we will agitate to secure the enactment of rigid and wholesome laws," declared the secretary. "We glory in the Maine Law. . . . We confidently expect that like the waters of the deep broad main that surges [along] her shores and, courses its sublime way along the magnificent line of the states, so this Healing Fountain of Temperance, that has gushed forth from her hills, will send abroad streams that shall deepen and extend until our whole land from Eastern main to Western, shall be renovated by its life-giving waters." A second women's convention was held in Dayton in September of 1853. Josephine Penfield Bateham, an Oberlin graduate and daughter of Mrs. Cowles, presided as president; Mrs. Hodge of Oberlin was assistant secretary; Mrs. Peck and Mrs. Cowles also attended from Oberlin. The formation of auxiliaries in ten counties was officially announced. At the first anniversary of the society, held in Columbus on January 12, 1854, the opening prayer was made by Mrs. Taylor of Oberlin; Mrs. Hodge of Oberlin acted as temporary secretary; Mrs. Cowles and her daughter, Mrs. Bateham, were elected mem-

[73] *Ibid.*, Dec. 8, 1852, and Aug. 17, 1853.

[74] *Ibid.*, Feb. 2, 1853; Alice Stone Blackwell, *Lucy Stone* (Boston—1930), 114; M. D. P. Cowles to Henry Cowles [Jan., 1853], and Sarah Cowles to M. D. P. Cowles, Jan. 11, 1853 (Cowles-Little MSS).

bers of the executive committee, and Mrs. Hodge joined the immortal Mrs. Amelia Bloomer of Mt. Vernon and three others on the Committee on a Memorial to the Legislature.[75]

What were the results of all this agitation? Restrictive laws were passed in 1851 and 1854 prohibiting the sale of spirituous liquors for consumption on the premises. In 1852 villages and cities were given authority to prohibit "ale and porter shops and houses, and places for significant or habitual resort for tippling and intemperance." Oberlin immediately put this authority into effect to stamp out "a rum shop on the borders" of the village—Oberlin's first "temperance war."[76] The Ohio laws were not effectively enforced in most places, however. The resolutions of the state temperance convention of 1855 dealt largely with the problem of putting teeth into the laws already passed. The hope of securing a completely prohibitory law seems to have been decidedly on the wane.[77] As the anti-slavery conflict became more intense other issues were overshadowed—temperance (or prohibition) among them.

When the slavery issue seemed to be well on the road to settlement Oberlin returned to the temperance question. In 1863 the Oberlin Temperance League was founded among the young people of Oberlin, mainly through the efforts of Miss Julia Fairchild. Its membership was made up largely of students, but also included some boys and girls of the town who were not connected with the College. By 1865 there were three hundred and fifty on its rolls, all of whom had signed the pledge *"to touch not, taste not, handle not."*[78] This society formed the beginning of the continuous chain of organizations which led through the society of adults bearing the same name in the early seventies and the later Oberlin Temperance Alliance to the Anti-Saloon League.

[75]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Oct. 12, 1853, and *Ohio Cultivator* (Columbus), Feb. 1, 1854.

[76]E. O. Randall and D. J. Ryan, *History of Ohio,* IV, 525–526 and 530; *Oberlin Evangelist,* Nov. 10, 1852, and H. C. Taylor to Gerrit Smith, Nov. 8, 1852 (Gerrit Smith MSS). See also the interesting *An Expression of the Public Sentiment of the Inhabitants of Oberlin, in Reference to the Commencement of the Sale of Intoxicating Drinks in the Village* (Oberlin—1852). Most wars, according to this pronouncement, were caused by the drunkenness of legislators!

[77]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Mar. 14, 1855.

[78]*Lorain County News* (Oberlin), Jan. 6 and 20, 1864, and July 26, 1865.

# CHAPTER XXIII

## *THE WHOLE MAN*

"The system of education in this Institute will provide for the body and heart as well as the intellect; for it aims at the best education of the whole man."

JOHN J. SHIPHERD'S first announcement of the Oberlin Institute, *New York Evangelist,* September 7, 1833.

REFORMERS have always recognized that the surest way of changing society was through the education of the young. All over the Occidental world there was a reawakened interest in education and educational methods in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The educational experiments of Pestalozzi, of Fellenberg and of Robert Owen were watched with close attention by Americans as well as by their fellow Europeans. The new spirit of benevolence and democracy developed in America in the late twenties and thirties demanded education for the children of all citizens, rich and poor, and presented a situation especially favorable to educational reform. On this side of the water William C. Woodbridge, Horace Mann, Samuel Read Hall, Henry Barnard, William A. Alcott, Calvin E. Stowe and many others studied the European methods, elaborated and amended them, explained them to their fellow American teachers, and experimented for themselves.[1]

Again the Christian reformers were first in the field, preparing the way for the better-known political reformers like Mann and Barnard. In October, 1830, a Convention of Teachers and Friends of Education was held at Utica in the heart of the Finney country. Among others, the Revs. G. W. Gale, John Frost and Dirck C. Lansing—all Finneyites—were in attendance. There

[1]For the background educational history see Merle Curti, *Social Ideas of American Educators* (New York—c. 1935), and Edgar W. Knight, *Education in the United States* (Boston—c. 1929).

was much discussion of defects in the common school system: "incapacity and ignorance of teachers," "bad government of schools," "want of suitable apparatus," etc. Another convention was called for the following January (1831) at the same place. When again assembled Rev. Gilbert Morgan, later of the Rochester Institute of Practical Education, was called to the chair. The "New York State Lyceum" was organized, devoted to the "improvement of education, especially in common schools," and an elaborate report was received from the "Committee on Studies and Exercises." This report recommended the expansion of the school curriculum to include natural sciences, political science and bookkeeping, the abandonment of learning by rote, the provision of more teaching apparatus, etc.[2]

Samuel Read Hall, the author of *Lectures on School-Keeping* and principal of the Andover Teachers' Seminary, called a meeting of educational reformers at his institution in 1832. The American School Agents' Society, then organized, planned to send educational agents to the West and South, "improve the schools, [and] promote the establishment of Lyceums." Hall was the dominant figure in the society and held the office of vice-president; G. W. Gale, of the Oneida Institute, was a secretary. A report of the Board of Directors emphasized the importance of the "appropriateness of knowledge to the wants of life," the "absence from our schools of all articles of apparatus for visible illustrations," the neglect of "moral culture," and the "want of well qualified instructers."[3]

Shipherd, the founder of Oberlin, was in close touch with two of these educational reformers: William C. Woodbridge and Samuel Read Hall. Woodbridge, a graduate of Yale in the class of 1811, spent several years in Europe in the twenties observing the work of the educational leaders there, especially of Pestalozzi and Fellenberg. From 1830 to 1837 he edited the *American Annals of Education,* the most important American educational journal of its time. Shipherd was a reader of the *Annals* and, in the summer of 1833, we find him visiting Woodbridge and Hall to get their advice on plans for the Oberlin Institute. Hall, as we have seen, was elected first President of Oberlin, and had much to do with the selection of the first faculty and the plan-

[2] *Western Recorder,* Nov. 9, 1830, and Jan. 25, 1831.
[3] *Vermont Chronicle,* Apr. 26, July 27, Aug. 24 and 31, 1833.

ning of the school, even preparing a design for a schoolhouse for Oberlin, which contained a "General S.[chool] Room," and "S.[chool] Room for Girls." Hall's health prevented him from actually coming to Oberlin to undertake its management.[4]

If Hall had come to Oberlin it would probably have become primarily a normal school. As it was, the emphasis on teacher training in Oberlin's early years may be partially attributed to his influence. Hall was the American pioneer in the movement, though Horace Mann secured the establishment of the first state-supported normal school at Lexington, Mass., in 1839. The provision of right-minded, adequately trained and competent elementary school teachers had been recognized as one of the fundamental necessities of educational and social reform and a prime means of propaganda. One of Shipherd's chief purposes in founding Oberlin was to furnish "pious school teachers" for the "desolate Mississippi valley." He included in his scheme a Teachers' Seminary, whose purpose was declared in 1834 to be to make the student teachers "familiar with the physical and intellectual constitutions of those whom they educated, and thoroughly discipline their own minds, . . . and thus exalt common schools above what they can be, while they are taught by temporary and uneducated instructors."[5]

Every year hundreds of Oberlin students went out to temporary or permanent teaching appointments. Until the mid-forties no special course of training in teaching methods was provided, though Alice Welch Cowles, a former pupil in Joseph Emerson's school at Byfield, did conduct some discussions on the subject among the young ladies.[6] In 1845, however, Professor Amasa Walker presented a report to the trustees on teacher training. "Common schools," declared Walker, "are the Colleges of the people—Nineteen twentieths of the whole population receive education in no other. To exert an influence in these therefore is to strike at the masses of society. The vocation of the School master is one of great responsibility & influence, & the preparation [of] a class of persons for that responsible station is an object worthy the highest efforts of Christian Philanthropy. The government of this Seminary can engage in no higher or better work, &

[4]See above pages 98–100 and 128. There is a sketch of Hall in Barnard's *Journal of American Education*, V, 373.

[5]Oberlin Collegiate Institute, *First Annual Report, 1834*, page 6.

[6]Nancy Prudden to George Prudden, May 16, 1837 (Prudden MSS).

if by a moderate degree of effort a good Normal School can be connected with this institution, your committee believe that a vast amount of good might be done to the people of the West, & a great interest be created in the community in favor of Oberlin. The attention of the wise & good throughout the land is directed toward common schools, they are rising in importance in public estimation every day, and, while to a great extent the Colleges of our land are in a languishing condition, our common schools are constantly increasing in favor. These and many other considerations that might be named seem to render it highly desirable in a region like this that a School for the preparation of Common School teachers should be established."[7]

In 1846 a separate Teachers' Department was established. In 1848 the first diploma was granted to a graduate of that department.[8] By 1850 twenty students were enrolled. At first the Teachers' Course differed from the regular College Course largely in the omission of Latin and Greek and of one year's residence, the time required thus being reduced to three years. "Lectures on Teaching" were added, apparently usually given in the fall term before the students ventured out to their winter schools. (The winter vacation lasted from the fourth Wednesday in November to the fourth Wednesday in February.) Beginning in 1861 the College announced teachers' institutes every fall "continuing about six weeks, in which special instruction is given in the branches pursued in Common Schools." Lectures were also given on the "Theory and Practice of Teaching . . . by experienced and distinguished teachers" besides exercises "in the best methods of teaching the various branches." In 1864 the name "Teachers Course" gave way to "Scientific Course," but the content continued the same even to the "Lectures on Teaching." The numbers enrolled did not greatly increase; only twenty-eight were listed in 1866.[9] Many others, however, took advantage of the teachers' institute and gained experience as teachers under supervision in the Preparatory Department.

To Jean Frederic Oberlin, himself, belongs the credit for establishing the first "infant school" of modern times. It was Robert Owen, however, who made the most spectacular experiment and

[7]"Report of Committee on Normal Schools, Accepted August, 1845" (Misc. Archives).

[8]T. M., Aug. 24, 1846, and Aug. 22, 1848, and *Catalogues*.

[9]*Catalogues*.

did the most toward popularizing the idea. Americans quickly took it up; the *American Journal of Education* and the *American Annals of Education* contain many pages on the subject. In Woodbridge's "Address" in the first number of the latter he listed infant education as second only in importance to female education. In 1828 an "Infant School Society" was established in Boston, and similar societies were founded in New York and Philadelphia. Shipherd brought a teacher for an infant school to Elyria in 1830 and, appropriately enough, included an infant school in the institution named after the originator of the idea. When the Institute was opened on December 3, 1833, it contained an infant school taught by Eliza Branch, who was brought especially from Vermont to teach it.[10] The experiment, however, was given up after about a year. In Oberlin as elsewhere the infant school became the primary department of the public school, and the special types of instruction adapted to very small children were abandoned.

There was much discussion of new methods of discipline and the motivation of study. Reformers taught that the rod was really not necessary and that obedience and industry might be secured by "moral suasion." This was just the type of reform that appealed to Oberlinites. In 1837 we find an Oberlin student-teacher, George Prudden, governing his pupils at Lockport, N. Y., "by moral principles, instead of the rod and rule." Two years later another Oberlin teacher wrote from the central part of Ohio: "My school numbers 30, and is in a flourishing condition. At first fighting and swearing prevailed, but for weeks I have heard and seen none. My endeavor has been to instill the principles of love into their minds for a rule of action . . . School is now half out and I have not whipped a scholar. They appear, as said above, ashamed to do wrong."[11] There were some who even decried emulation, "the desire to excel," as a motive for study. Samuel Read Hall, for example, believed that "by banishing the principle of emulation from our schools, many evils may be averted and much benefit secured." If the scholar's self-interest and responsibility to parents and to God were appealed to and, above all, if study were made interesting, Hall declared that it

[10]On Eliza Branch see above, page 122.

[11]Nancy Prudden to George Prudden, May 16, 1837 (Prudden MSS), and W. E. Benham to Levi Burnell, Dec. 22, 1839 (Treas. Off., File A).

would not be necessary "to excite emulation." Catharine Beecher, the distinguished leader in the field of "female education," heartily seconded Hall's position.[12] At Oberlin, in the period covered by this study, artificial appeals to emulation were always discouraged. There were no prizes and no honors; there were not even any valedictorians or salutatorians at Commencement. No term grades were recorded in the earlier years; a student was either passed or failed.[13]

Miss Beecher reported her observation that if *"a correct tone of moral sentiment"* were established in a school, physical punishments and emulation could easily be dispensed with. For this reason, and for its intrinsic importance, character education, both moral and religious, was held, by most educators, to be the highest aim of the schools. Woodbridge found moral and religious education in their proper position of prominence at Fellenberg's school at Hofwyl. Oberlin's emphasis on the "cultivation of the sensibilities" as well as "the mental faculties" was thus also in line with the best educational thought of the age.[14]

The new emphasis on physical education and on practical education, the war on the "Heathen Classics," the encouragement of instruction in music, and the "elevation of female character" were all prominent phases of the trend of educational thought in the middle third of the nineteenth century. In each instance their expression at Oberlin deserves a more detailed and special treatment.

In Woodbridge's *American Annals of Education* and in the *Quarterly Christian Spectator,* John J. Shipherd read of "Fellenberg's celebrated school at Hofwyl in Switzerland."[15] Hofwyl was the prototype of most of the manual labor schools of the nineteenth century. There Fellenberg's pupils not only engaged in gymnastics but were afforded "opportunities for gardening" in the afternoon in order to develop their physical as well as mental powers. W. C. Woodbridge, Rev. Elias Cornelius of the American

[12]*American Annals of Education,* II, 205–209 (Apr. 1, 1832), and III, 28–32 (Jan., 1833).

[13]Leonard-Fairchild, MS Notes, I, 64–65.

[14]*American Annals of Education,* I, 132–134 (Apr., 1831), 449–453 (Oct., 1831), and II, 218–225 (Apr. 1, 1832).

[15]It is known that Shipherd was a reader of both these publications in the early thirties. A receipt for a two years' subscription to the *Annals* is in the Miscellaneous Archives. The reference to Fellenberg's school is quoted from a letter from J. J. Shipherd to E. Redington, Aug. 9, 1833 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

Education Society and others advocated the Swiss pedagogue's methods in the United States. The "physiological reformers" gladly seconded the educational reformers, believing as they did in the absolute necessity of exercise in the open air for the maintenance of health.[16]

But there was a special situation in the United States which made Fellenberg's ideas acceptable. In fact there are good grounds for supposing that a similar type of schools would have been established in the United States had the Swiss innovator never lived. In the first place, in a country lacking surplus capital it was difficult to finance schools, and, secondly, on the frontier there was a great deal of unskilled labor required to clear the forest, build houses and school buildings, and begin agricultural activities. Land and lumber were cheap; labor was the most expensive commodity. If the students did the work they could build their own schools and raise the food for themselves and their instructors. The democratic ideal, then developing in America, favored the combination of learning with honest and honorable toil. In the eyes of the small farmer and frontiersman learning was flattered by the association. The sons of these farmers, we are repeatedly informed, often sank into an early grave when they left the axe and the plow for unrelieved devotion to study. Sports were considered suitable for young children only and too undignified for mature students. Gymnastics were uninteresting and silly. Manual labor exactly fitted the situation. A few hours' work a day would pay the student's expenses, instill true principles of democracy, protect his health and keep him out of mischief.

As we have already seen, George W. Gale's Oneida Institute, established at Whitesboro near Utica, was the pattern for most of the American manual labor schools. The Christian reformers took up the idea enthusiastically and organized the Society for Promoting Manual Labor in Literary Institutions. Theodore Weld was the agent and his report issued in the name of the so-

[16]On the manual labor movement in the United States see: James C. Boykin, "Physical Training," United States Commissioner of Education, *Report, 1891–92* (Washington–1894), 485–486; L. F. Anderson, "The Manual Labor School Movement," *Educational Review,* XLVI, 369–386 (Nov., 1913), and Edgar W. Knight, "Manual Labor Schools in the South," *South Atlantic Quarterly,* XVI, 209–221 (July, 1917); C. A. Bennett, *History of Manual and Industrial Education up to 1860* (Peoria, Ill.,—[1926]), etc.

ciety early in 1833 is the most detailed statement of the case for "manual labor-with-study."[17] He argued that it was desirable that students should engage in manual labor because the wages earned would help to pay for their education and thus enable the poor to study, because it would promote in the students "habits of industry," "independence of character," and "originality," because its "moral effect would be peculiarly happy," and because the students would gain thereby important practical training in manual pursuits. Manual labor was declared to be preferable to gymnastic exercises because it was productive, more interesting and educational, as well as because gymnastics were declared to be dangerous, unnatural and "unphilosophical," and because the "laboring classes . . . are disgusted and repelled by the grotesque and ludicrous antics of the gymnasium."[18] Above all, manual labor was recommended, however, because it furnished the exercise felt to be necessary to the health of students. To prove the necessity of regular exercise to good health many quotations were included: from John Quincy Adams, from Prof. Hitchcock's *Dyspepsy Forestalled & Resisted*, from the *Journal of Health*, from Dr. Mussey of Dartmouth, from President Wayland of Brown, from Thomas S. Grimké of Charleston, S. C., and from Justice Joseph Story. The report is like a patent medicine advertisement, so filled is it with testimonials.

John Jay Shipherd became an enthusiastic convert and promoter of this cause also. When feeling unwell he regularly resorted to the axe as to a tonic. "I am also chopping, loging, etc.," he wrote on one occasion to his brother. "I have blistered my hands over & over, & the pain of them is sweet; for it relieves my scalded brain."[19] In January of 1833 Weld's report was issued. In August of the same year Shipherd announced his Oberlin Collegiate Institute, which he sometimes referred to as the "Oberlin Manual Labor Institute."

Manual labor was the most prominent feature of the Oberlin Institute in its early years. All the early statements are full of it: the petition to the legislature for incorporation, dated December, 1833, the so-called "First Circular" of March, 1834, and the

[17]See above, Chapter V.

[18]Society for Promoting Manual Labor in Literary Institutions, *First Annual Report* (New York—1833).

[19]J. J. Shipherd to Fayette Shipherd, Sept. 30, 1835 (Shipherd MSS).

*First Annual Report* of November, 1834. Shipherd declared in the summer of 1834 that the Oberlin aim was to give as thorough education as elsewhere "and yet through the Lord's blessing, its alumni [should also] have health and muscle, with a disposition to 'endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.' "[20]

Manual labor was actively practiced throughout the first fifteen years and more. It was one of the chief attractions of the institution. It may be classified with Oberlin's other "peculiarities": anti-slavery, "Grahamism," perfectionism, etc. From Oberlin the manual labor idea was spread throughout the West by students and teachers. The young lady who wrote to her parents that she hoped to be allowed to make a batch of Graham bread for them during her approaching visit added: "I want also to have the privilege of milking one cow every morning, and I shall want to do a few other chores for exercise, and perhaps a little sewing for mother."[21] The branch schools established to take the overflow of students from Oberlin in 1836 all enforced manual labor. Hiram Wilson founded a manual labor school for fugitive Negroes in Canada. Of course, Shipherd's Olivet in Michigan was also a manual labor institution.

Though the actual practice of manual labor declined and the college farm was sold, the ideal was officially adhered to even into the sixties. As Horace Greeley put it in the *New York Tribune:* "We don't admit that Oberlin has given up manual labor—far from it—though it has been somewhat staggered in its adherence thereto, mainly because of its inability to provide labor for all its pupils, especially in proper variety." The emphasis on manual labor as an aid to health, however, was early subordinated to the support of that system for its pecuniary benefit to the student. An official report from the faculty in 1846 declared that the system in Oberlin had proved decidedly beneficial to the physical well-being of the participating students, but the same report devoted about five times as much space to the financial results.[22] Everywhere there was a decline in the popularity of manual labor with study. In 1865 even Theodore Weld partially recanted.[23] The system worked best under frontier conditions where

[20]J. J. S. in *Ohio Observer,* July 17, 1834.
[21]Sarah P. Ingersoll to David Ingersoll, July 9, 1839 (lent by Mrs. Friedrich Lehmann, Oberlin).
[22]*Oberlin Evangelist,* May 26, 1852, and Mar. 4, 1846.
[23]J. C. Boykin, *Loc. Cit.,* 510.

the amount of available work requiring little skill was comparatively large. By the sixties, too, the "grotesque and ludicrous antics of the gymnasium" were being practiced by an increasing number of health devotees.

Without manual labor it is very doubtful if Oberlin would have attracted enough students to justify the continuance of the institution. The practice of manual labor with study did not, of course, die out, as so many writers have supposed. Cornell was founded on manual labor principles in the sixties. Berea College in Kentucky, copying its system directly from Oberlin, continues its use to this day, under circumstances approximating those of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute a hundred years ago. Besides, there is a direct connection between the manual labor movement and the later introduction of manual training and agricultural and mechanical education.

Of all the early manual labor schools, Oberlin maintained the system the longest and on the largest scale. It is surprising that writers on this interesting movement have so long overlooked it.[24]

The manual labor system, the backbone of the Oberlin educational scheme at the beginning, was recommended because it would help to keep the student in strong and vigorous health. Three or four hours at the woodpile, in the field or (for young ladies) at the washtub were expected to furnish not only the financial wherewithal and a certain practical training, but also physical vigor and, therefore, a clear head for the hours at the study table. The students (and probably some of the faculty) soon, however, came to overlook all motives other than the financial one. Much of the labor performed was of little benefit from the health standpoint. With the rush of students in the fifties, following the great sale of scholarships, any effort to furnish labor to all was frankly abandoned.

A different type of physical exercise was gaining popularity in America at that time—gymnastics. Karl Follen and Karl Beck had introduced the *Jahn* system of gymnastics from Germany in the twenties. In 1827 Signor Voarino's *Treatise on Calisthenics Exercises Arranged for the Private Tuition of Ladies* was published in London and many copies were introduced into

[24]A detailed study of the working of the manual labor system at Oberlin will be found in Chapters XXXIX and XL.

this country, and within ten years the young ladies at Oberlin were practicing this form of exercise. The men were too dignified and too busily engaged in manual labor to do so. But as early as 1847 the editor of the *Ohio Cultivator* concluded from the appearance of Oberlin students that the manual labor system was not fulfilling expectations as to its effect on health and physique. He urged the college authorities to "build a *gymnasium,* and require the students to practice a regular system of gymnastics, in connection with their daily study and labor."[25] In the fifties a strong movement for systematic physical training began among the intellectual and religious leaders of the United States. Emerson, Holmes, Beecher and Higginson spoke and wrote in behalf of regular, scientific physical exercise and described American men as "hollow-chested, narrow-shouldered, ill-developed."[26] By 1859 an Oberlin student writer could draw as sad a picture of the results of study without exercise as the best of them: "A shattered remnant of former glory survive to the attainment of Senioric dignities, among which spectacles fill a conspicuous place. . . . The proud day of graduation at last arrives, and their efforts receive the plaudits of a crowd of curious listeners. . . . Their performances are a nine days' wonder, and garrulous gossips may even sound their praises a month. The proud youths, after a few days of needed rest, return to their friends by easy stages, bearing with them the well-thumbed, coveted sheepskin and a diseased liver."[27]

The example of Amherst in building a gymnasium and the Rev. Mr. Higginson's article in the *Atlantic* spurred Oberlin students to action. In the summer of 1860 a Students' Gymnastic Club was formed and began exercises—"swinging scepters or clubs in such a way as to bring all the muscles into vigorous action."[28] At the time of the annual meeting of the trustees in August a petition was presented in behalf of the students, signed by three of their number, stating that $350.00 had already been raised for the erection of a gymnasium building and requesting the trustees to make an equal contribution. A joint session of the

[25]*Ohio Cultivator,* Sept. 15, 1847.

[26]A. C. Cole, "Our Sporting Grandfathers" in the *Atlantic Monthly,* C L, 88–96 (July, 1932).

[27]*Oberlin Students' Monthly,* I, 426–427 (Sept., 1859).

[28]*Ibid.,* (Mar., 1861), III, 154–155, and *Lorain County News,* May 9 and Aug. 1, 1860.

faculty and trustees showed that the majority were frankly unsympathetic. They did not share the opinion of some students that "a half hour in the Gymnasium is worth two at sawing wood" and that manual labor was unsatisfactory because it did not "unbend the mind and furnish that relaxation which student life demands." A spokesman reported that it was the general consensus that if any money were available it should go to promote productive labor rather than unproductive. The Board did consent to grant land for the erection of the gymnasium, but no money, and by formal resolution they made clear their position, expressing "their high regard for manual labor & their solemn purpose to sustain & encourage its interests in this College hereafter as heretofore by every means in their power."[29] The attitude of the College authorities was much like that of the farmer whose boy wanted to play baseball when the corn needed hoeing. The manual labor system, a step forward in its day, became a stumbling block to progress in its decadence.

Having failed to secure financial aid from the College, the gymnasium enthusiasts organized a joint stock company. Stock or scholarships were sold at $3.00 and $5.00, the former entitling the holder to use the gymnasium for two, and the latter for four, years. Professor Peck, two townsmen and two students were named as trustees and managers. Stock certificates were advertised in the local paper:

GYMNASIUM!

"A SOUND MIND IN A SOUND BODY."

All persons who by their subscriptions are entitled to certificates in the New Gymnasium, and all others, as many as desire a manly development of Muscle and wish to secure

CERTIFICATES

May receive them of the undersigned.

E. Gray, West College St.
C. T. Fenn, 48 T.[appan] H[all].[30]

[29]Petition signed by A. B. Nettleton, N. Morey and W. H. Scott, Aug. 18, 1860 (Trustees' MSS, Misc. Archives); *Oberlin Students' Monthly*, III, 154–155, (Mar., 1861); *Oberlin Evangelist*, Aug. 15, 29, 1860, and T. M., Aug. 18 and 20, 1860.
[30]*Lorain County News*, Mar. 13, 1861.

No. 12 $3.00

CERTIFICATE

FOR USE OF THE

Oberlin Gymnasium.

TWO YEARS' CERTIFICATE.

This Certifies that Rufus Maculey

or ORDER, in consideration of the sum of THREE DOLLARS, paid to the Trustees of the OBERLIN GYMNASIUM ASSOCIATION, is entitled to the use of the

OBERLIN GYMNASIUM,

For ONE PERSON AT A TIME, for TWO YEARS, Provided,

1. That this Certificate shall cover no charges for Instruction or Incidental Expenses.

2. That the person using the Gymnasium on this Certificate shall be subject to the Regulations adopted, at any time, by the Association.

A. B. Neutelow, Treas.

Oberlin, March 4th 1861.

Shankland & Harmon, Printers, Oberlin, O.

STOCK CERTIFICATE IN THE OBERLIN GYMNASIUM, 1861

The gymnasium, a one-story structure, eighty by thirty feet, situated on Tappan Square, was completed in March, 1861, at a cost of something over a thousand dollars. On the 30th the building "was opened with appropriate exercises, and a new era in the physical culture of Oberlin students inaugurated." Professor Ellis, Professor Peck and Principal Fairchild spoke. Samuel Putnam of the Worcester Gymnastic Club, of Worcester, Massachusetts, who had been hired as instructor for three months, demonstrated his fitness by various feats and "gave great satisfaction to the spectators." For the time "vaulting bars and dumb bells [were] in the ascendant" at Oberlin.[31]

Short was the shrift of the first Oberlin gymnasium. Less than three weeks after its opening the guns of the harbor batteries in Charleston drowned out all lesser noise. The instructor was one of the first to enlist. Of the three signers of the gymnasium petition: Nettleton joined the army early and soon became a colonel (later a general and years later, under Harrison, Acting Secretary of the Treasury); Scott went away with the famous Oberlin Company C, and was taken prisoner in the first engagement; Morey volunteered a few months later. Because of the war many subscriptions were never paid, and Professor Ellis, Samuel Plumb, and other guarantors incurred considerable losses. The building was probably never well suited to its purpose, anyway. No one was secured to succeed Putnam as instructor. In 1863 the College paid the remaining debt of the Gymnasium Association (about $200.00) and took over the building. In the fall of the year it was torn down, only a little over two years from the time of its completion.[32] For the next twelve years Oberlin was to be without a gymnasium.

The gymnasium was distinctly a gymnasium for men, though there was some talk of allowing the ladies to use it during certain days in the week. Gymnastics for the ladies was introduced earlier but developed more slowly. In the thirties what seem to have been very moderate exercises were practiced, probably under the leadership of the Female Principal. Nancy Prudden reported to her parents in 1837 that every day at five in the afternoon she

[31] *Oberlin Students' Monthly*, III, 191, (Apr., 1861); *Lorain County News*, Mar. 27 and Apr. 3, 1861, and *University Quarterly*, III, 149–150 (July, 1861).

[32] P. C. M., Apr. 3, 1862; Lucien Warner, *Story of My Life*, 38–39, *Lorain County News*, Apr. 1, and Oct. 7, 1863.

and the other young ladies practiced "calisthenics, entering and leaving the room, etc."[33] The interest in such exercises was probably stimulated by the physiological reform movement of that time. In the late fifties (1858) the Prudential Committee appropriated "the ground south of the Boarding Hall to the use of the young ladies of the Inst. for a recreation ground," and a committee was appointed to put it in condition.[34] When the new Ladies' Hall was constructed (in the middle sixties), the top floor was left open as an exercise room for rainy days. What form of exercise the young ladies engaged in in the places set aside for their use, we can only guess—probably nothing very strenuous.

The new interest in sports in the fifties and sixties was a result not only of the general secularization and the advance of culture toward the west but of a realization of the value of sport for physical recreation. It is significant that in 1858 the Phi Delta society debated the question, "Resolved, that the revival of the athletic sports of the ancient Greeks would be beneficial to the mental and moral condition of the present age." A few years later we even find one of the ladies' societies discussing whether "the ladies of the different classes ought to form themselves into sporting clubs."[35]

Education for the masses—for the poor—implied, of course, useful training. It was to be expected, therefore, that practical education would be emphasized in this period, especially in the United States, and that the success of a school or a system would be measured by the useful facts or skills which the students acquired. Yankee farmers contemplating sending their children to college asked the question: "Of what use is this education? Can my children earn a better living because of it?" Probably all of the educational reformers favored a practical training, but some interpreted "practical" in a way that the public was not likely to follow. Lowell Mason certainly regarded musical training as practical, but the average American of his day as certainly did not. In Oberlin the course in Physiology, taught from the very beginning, was considered one of the "practical" courses, and such apparently it was. Scientific subjects, in general, were likely

[33]Nancy [and Davis] Prudden to George Prudden, Apr. 8, 13, 1837 (Prudden MSS).

[34]P. C. M., May [?], 1858.

[35]Phi Delta, MS Minutes, Oct. 20, 1858, and Aelioian, Mar. 18, 1862. On sport see below, pages 824–826.

to be classified with the practical subjects, as distinguished from the classical or literary subjects. Shipherd in his earlier statements always referred to "practical" education as the aim at Oberlin. In this he included religious education and everything that would help to fit the student for service as a minister, missionary, or pious school teacher. The teaching of Hebrew was preferred as against Latin partly because it was more "practical."

The general understanding of practical education was more restricted. Practical education was usually thought of as that which involved dealing with common things in an ordinary way and especially preparation for earning a livelihood. The Oberlin manual labor system with its domestic department and work on the college farm was practical in this sense. The training of teachers, agricultural education, mechanical training, and commercial education were universally recognized as truly practical. The Teachers' Course at Oberlin has been previously dealt with. Mechanical training was never attempted on any considerable scale. Agricultural and commercial education, however, both appeared, and deserve special consideration.

Oberlin was one of the pioneer schools in the introduction of agricultural education. For years there had been much discussion of the matter all over the country. The manual labor system was supposed to give some training in farming, but largely failed in this aim in Oberlin as elsewhere. As early as 1832 a special "Convention of the Friends of Agricultural Education" was held at Albany. An elaborate plan for an agricultural school was presented, but nothing came of it until the fifties when the "People's College" was still-born.[36] A number of purely agricultural academies were actually founded, such as the Gardiner Lyceum in Maine and the Cream Hill Agricultural School in Connecticut. "Farmers' College" was established near Cincinnati in 1846, but it was not granted the right to confer degrees until 1855. Nor until that date did it have a farm or educate many farmers. Perhaps more significant was the appearance of courses in the application of science to agriculture in the offerings of various established colleges. In 1843 the Amherst College *Catalogue* announced "a lecturer on agricultural chemistry and

[36] *American Annals of Education*, III, 212–219 (May, 1833), and A. C. True, *A History of Agricultural Education in the United States, 1785–1925* (Washington—1929), 48–57.

mineralogy," and four years later Yale offered lectures "in the application of science to the arts and agriculture." Instruction in agriculture was provided for in the University of Georgia in 1855.[37]

In 1845 Norton Strange Townshend was appointed a trustee of the Oberlin Institute to take the place of Amasa Walker. Whether Dr. Townshend may rightly be, as he is often called, "the father of agricultural education in America," he certainly was the father of agricultural education in Oberlin. Dr. Townshend was born in Northamptonshire, England, in 1815, but when he was fifteen years old moved with his parents to a farm in Lorain County, Ohio, not far from Oberlin. In 1837 he began the study of medicine in Elyria, which he later continued in Cincinnati, New York, Edinburgh, Dublin and Paris. He received a diploma from the *Ecôle de Médecine* in the *Université de France* and returned to Elyria to practice in 1841.[38]

In the very next year following his election to the Board of Trustees of Oberlin, Townshend submitted a proposal for the establishment of an agricultural school. The memorial is dated at Elyria, August 26, 1846:

"It has been proposed to the faculty of this institution to establish an Agricultural School in Oberlin to be in Session during the whole or a part of the College vacation.

"The plan requires the Selection of four or more lecturers to give instruction upon the following subjects:

"1 Geology with Mineralogy & Chemistry showing their applications to well digging—draining—the use of manures and other means for the amelioration of soils &c &c.

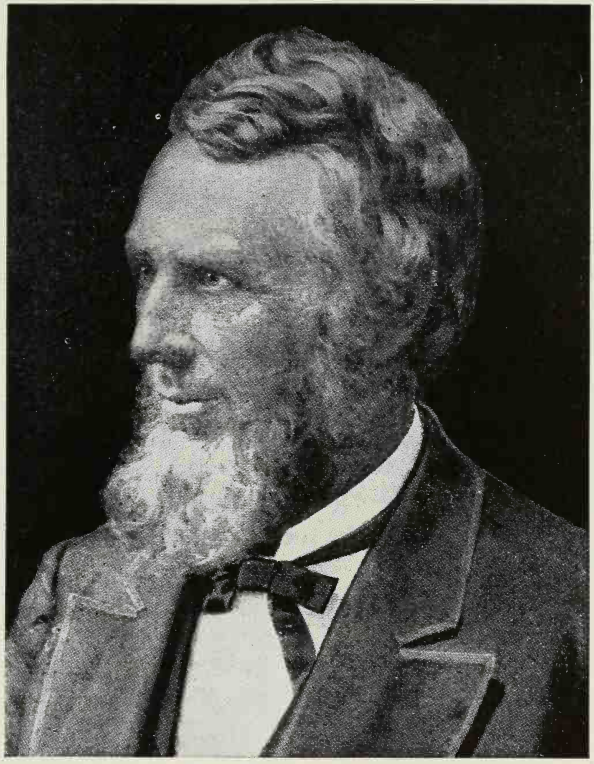
"2 Vegetable Physiology and Botany in their applications to field, orchard & garden culture with Specific instructions respecting the cultivation of the most useful plants &c &c.

"3 Comparative Anatomy, Physiology and Pathology—their bearing upon the raising & feeding of stock—the improvement of varieties—& the treatment of diseases common to this region &c &c.

"4 Natural Philosophy in reference to their forces and imple-

[37]*Ibid.*, 43–44, 51–53, 64, 71; and *Ohio Cultivator* (Columbus), Jan. 15, 1854.

[38]T. M., Aug. 29, 1845; Charles W. Burkett, *History of Ohio Agriculture* (Concord, N. H.–1900), and Harriet N. Townshend, "A Sketch of the Life of Dr. Norton Strange Townshend" (MS).



NORTON STRANGE TOWNSHEND
(From C. W. Burkett, *History of Ohio Agriculture* [Concord, N.H.—1900])

ments used in Agriculture—with Meterology & Farm Book-keeping &c &c.

"Lectures (say four) on the above mentioned topics given daily through the course.

"Lecturers remunerated and all expenses paid for the sale of admission tickets.

"It is believed this enterprise would not interfere seriously with the regular duties of the lecturers nor be inconsistent with the original objects of this institution."[39]

The trustees commended this plan "to the favorable consideration of the Faculty & Prudential Committee to take such action as may be deemed necessary," but the agricultural school was not actually established for eight years more. In the meantime, Dr. Townshend, Professor Dascomb and Professor James H. Fairchild prepared themselves for their later work by giving extension lectures on agriculture under the auspices of the Lorain County Agricultural Society.[40] In 1849 a course on the application of chemistry to agriculture was added to the College curriculum, described after 1850 as "Lectures on the Application of Science to Agriculture and the Arts."

There was much discussion, in the late forties and early fifties, of the need of scientific agricultural education in Ohio. In the very same year that Townshend made his proposal for a school at Oberlin, the President of the Ohio State Board of Agriculture, at its first annual meeting, recommended the establishment of an Ohio agricultural college. Early in 1854, M. B. Bateham of the *Ohio Cultivator,* a Finneyite who had married two Oberlin girls, declared that "better education of farmers . . . is the great want of the age."[41]

In September, 1854, a prospectus was issued for the "Ohio Agricultural College, Oberlin, Lorain Co., O." The object was declared to be "to place within the reach of Farmers, both old and young, the means of acquiring a thorough and practical acquaintance with all those branches of Science which have direct relations to Agriculture." It was to meet in the winter "when the farmer himself, or his sons, may best spare the time"

[39]Original in Misc. Archives; T. M., Aug. 24, 1846 (There seems to be an error here in dates, for Dr. Townshend's statement appears to be dated two days later); F. M., Sept. 17, 1846, and P. C. M., Oct. 26, 1846.

[40]*Ohio Cultivator,* Mar. 1, 1847.

[41]Burkett, *Op. Cit.,* 198–199, and *Ohio Cultivator,* Jan. 15, 1854.

and when, during the long College vacation, Oberlin buildings were available. The subjects taught were to "embrace whatever pertains to Animals, Vegetables, Land or Labor." The school was to begin on the first Monday in December and continue three months. The tuition was placed at the comparatively high figure of forty dollars for the three months.

Dr. Dascomb was to lecture on "Chemistry in all its applications to Soils, Manures, Animal and Vegetable Life, and the Domestic Arts, &c." Professor J. H. Fairchild's department would be "Natural Philosophy; Elements of Engineering and Land Surveying; Rural Architecture; Landscape Gardening and Farm Book Keeping," and Dr. John S. Newberry would deal with "Geology and Mineralogy; Botany, Descriptive and Physiological, with special reference to the history and habitudes of all plants cultivated in the Garden and Orchard, or in the Field; the various modes of culture, and soils adapted to each." Dr. Townshend, himself, was to teach "Comparative Anatomy and Physiology, with special reference to the feeding and breeding of Stock; History and Description of Domestic Animals in their several varieties; Veterinary Medicine and Surgery; Entomology." He planned to perform various operations on domestic animals before the class. The school was to use the Music Hall and the Laboratory. The rental was appropriated, before it was received, for the building of a fence around the latter building.[42]

Mr. Bateham gave the school a fine editorial send-off in the *Ohio Cultivator,* expressing his hope that hundreds of young Ohioans would take advantage of the opportunity thus afforded them for becoming scientific as well as practical agriculturists.[43] He visited the classes at Oberlin in January and was favorably impressed. A résumé of a lecture "On the Secretion and Composition of Milk" was published in the *Cultivator.* It was a source of disappointment to Bateham and to Townshend that the attendance was so small.[44]

The Ohio Agricultural College never met again at Oberlin.

[42]*Ohio Cultivator,* Sept. 15, 1854, and later issues. The announcement was also published as a circular. P. C. M., [not dated—some time in summer of 1854].

[43]*Ohio Cultivator,* Sept. 15, 1854. A similar puff appears in the issue of Dec. 1, 1854, published just before the beginning of the course of lectures. See also the letter from a visitor in *Ibid.,* Dec. 15, 1854.

[44]*Ibid.,* Jan. 1, 1855.

In 1855 and again in 1856 the lectures were repeated in Cleveland, Dr. Dascomb, Prof. Fairchild and Townshend being among the lecturers as at Oberlin.[45] Dr. Townshend made an unsuccessful attempt to secure financial aid through the Ohio State legislature and then abandoned the enterprise. There were probably never more than forty students attending the lectures at any one time.[46] Dr. Townshend served for some time in the Ohio Assembly and Senate, the United States House of Representatives, and on the State Board of Agriculture. In 1857 he resigned from the Board of Trustees of Oberlin College. During the Civil War he acted as Medical Inspector in the United States Army and in 1867 was on the Wool Tariff Commission. In 1869 he returned to his chosen field, having been appointed first Professor of Agriculture in the Iowa Agricultural College. In 1870 he was made a trustee of the newly-founded Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College. Three years later he resigned his position in Iowa to become the first Professor of Agriculture in the Ohio institution, which later changed its name to Ohio State University. In this capacity he served until 1891, and died in Columbus in 1895. The agricultural building at Ohio State was named in his honor Townshend Hall.[47]

Dr. Townshend had taken an active part in securing the passage of the land grant for colleges in 1862. It was natural that Oberlin should favor the distribution of the funds made available by this act among the existing colleges rather than the establishment of a new state institution. At a meeting of the Prudential Committee late in 1864, "Profs. Cowles & J. H. Fairchild, one or both of them, were made a committee to meet delegates from other Colleges in Ohio, at Columbus on the 27th inst. to consider the propriety of memorializing the legislature of the State for the allotment of the National Grant for Agricultural Colleges, among the principal existing colleges of the State." Again, two years later, Governor J. D. Cox (Oberlin, A.B., 1851) having suggested the possibility of Oberlin's receiving some part of the grant, the Prudential Committee, together with the resident trustees and faculty, "Voted that it was

[45]*Ibid.*, Oct. 15, 1855, and Nov. 15, 1856.
[46]True, *Op. Cit.*, 73.
[47]N. S. Townshend to Hamilton Hill, May 30, 1857 (Misc. Archives); and Harriet N. Townshend, *Op. Cit.*, and T. C. Mendenhall, *History of the Ohio State University*, I, 437 *et seq.*, and 67 *et seq.*

expedient to take measures to secure an appropriation from the Legislature of one third of the grant."[48] No other attempt has ever been made to establish agricultural courses in Oberlin, but the influence of Dr. Townshend, who made his first experiment at Oberlin, has been a very significant factor in the history of American agricultural education.

The business school or "commercial college" is a characteristic product of the American belief in practical education. As such it is not surprising that it should have developed in the middle third of the nineteenth century when so many other typically American things appeared. In this period wandering teachers conducted classes in penmanship, bookkeeping, etc., in various towns and cities all over the country. Some of these classes developed into permanent business colleges. Successful business schools colonized, and by the sixties chains of commercial colleges, like the Bryant and Stratton schools, had been established. Among the pioneers were James Bennett and Thomas Jones of New York and P. M. Bartlett of Philadelphia, all of whom founded schools in the early forties. Equally important were the itinerant penmen, Silas S. Packard and Platt Rogers Spencer. These schools differed from the usual educational enterprises in that they were conducted for profit. The course of study was often ridiculously short and the teachers inadequately trained. Nevertheless they did an important work in preparing skilled clerks and bookkeepers (not executives), and were probably largely responsible for the rapid introduction of women into office work.[49]

In the very first year of the existence of the Oberlin Institute, Mr. B. A. Webster appeared and taught "the art of Stenography with ability and success" in four lessons for two dollars! In 1844 students petitioned the trustees that bookkeeping be made a regular part of the course of instruction, but no action was taken. The next year, however, and for five years following, Mr. E. G. Folsom taught writing, bookkeeping and shorthand as an extra,

[48]P. C. M., Dec. 16, 1864, and Nov. 26, 1866. Also *Lorain County News,* Jan. 16, 1867.

[49]"Commercial Education," in Paul Monroe, *Cyclopaedia of Education,* 5 vols. (N. Y., 1911–13); Edgar M. Barber, *A Contribution to the History of Commercial Education* (Brooklyn—1903), and Edmund J. James, "Commercial Education," in N. M. Butler (Ed.), *Monographs on Education in the United States,* 2 vols. (Albany—1900).

the students paying so much per lesson or course of lessons. Lucy Stone wrote to her sister in September of 1845: " . . . At [1 o'clock I] recite Phonography (which does not come regularly in the course, but I am learning it)."[50] From 1850 to 1853 "Book-keeping" was a regular part of the curriculum in the Scientific Course. In the latter year a college student, Robert W. Gilliam, submitted a bill "For instruction in bookkeeping to the members of the Scientific Course, 23 hours—$5.75."[51]

Writing teachers appear to have been on hand much of the time. S. C. Ingersoll taught penmanship in 1841 at fifty cents per pupil. Elizabeth Maxwell (later Mrs. James Monroe) took writing lessons in the following spring. In 1843 the faculty voted that "the individual appointed to teach writing be required to give twenty-five lessons to each course and that his pay be at the rate of 50 cents for each pupil, and that the institution can assume no responsibility for the payment of these bills." In 1849 and 1850 a student from Maine in the Preparatory Department gave an evening "course of instruction in Writing to 13 Gents of the Senior preparatory Class @ 50 cts each." In 1853 Peter Pindar Pease was granted "the use of one of the Recitation rooms for his Son to teach a class in Writing upon his undertaking to keep it in repair."[52]

One of the most interesting of the penmanship teachers was Platt Rogers Spencer, the inventor of Spencerian penmanship. Born in New York, he moved to Ashtabula county in the Western Reserve when a boy. His early life was divided between the practice of writing and his battle with intemperance. Eventually he became a teetotaler and an abolitionist, an early member of the Ashtabula Anti-Slavery Society. From the thirties to his death in 1864 he travelled about lecturing, giving writing lessons and founding business colleges. He published a series of copy sheets and copy books, beginning in 1848, which made his system of writing famous.[53]

[50]Notice in the *Cleveland Whig*, Nov. 12, 1834; T. M., Aug. 28, 1844; *Prospectus of Oberlin Business College . . . 1893–94* (Oberlin), 7, and Lucy Stone to Sarah Stone, Sept. 14, 1845 (lent by Alice Stone Blackwell, Boston).

[51]Catalogues and bills (Misc. Archives).

[52]Bills in Misc. Archives; F. M., Feb. 1, 1843; P. C. M., Dec. 11, 1849, and Nov. 28, 1853, and Elizabeth Maxwell to Father, Mar. 31, 1842, and to Mother, May 5, 1842 (lent by Emma M. Fitch).

[53]*National Cyclopaedia of American Biography; Biographical History of Northeastern Ohio* (Chicago—1893), 223–224; S. Morison, "American Penmanship," *Colophon*, part XVII (1934), and the *D. A. B.*

Apparently in 1859, he established in Oberlin a "Chirographic Institute" which later became part of the "Commercial Institute, under the general patronage of the College."[54] An announcement of this school in the College *Catalogue* for 1860–61 continues: " . . . It is under the direction of experienced and able Instructors, and embraces in its course the most approved form of Book Keeping, and all the branches of Commercial Science usually taught in similar Institutions. The Spencerian System of Penmanship is taught under the supervision of its author. Students in the Institute are required to observe the same regulations as to general conduct, as the students of the College." In 1862 a separate circular and catalogue was issued announcing the course of the "Spencerian Commercial and Chirographic Institute" of Oberlin as it was then called. S. S. Calkins was principal of the commercial department, and P. R. Spencer, Jr., son of the inventor of the system of penmanship, was principal of the "chirographic department." During the war period the Union Telegraphic Institute was also established at Oberlin, by Chester H. and Chauncey N. Pond, especially for the training of telegraph operators. Professor Dascomb was secured to teach theoretical physics as background for their work. Late in 1865 this school was consolidated with the Commercial Institute and the whole chartered as "Calkins, Griffin & Co's Union Business Institute."[55] The Institute's telegraph lines ran to Wellington, Medina and Elyria, and for a while the Wellington news column in the Oberlin newspaper was reported "By O. B. I. Telegraph."[56]

In its beginning the business school was closely associated with Oberlin College. The "Board of Referees" in 1862 was made up of ten members of the College faculty, the pastor of the Second Congregational Church and a member of the College Board of Trustees. In 1865 this board included a number of business men besides the College professors. After 1866 the professors are no longer listed by name. Announcements of the business school

[54]In August of 1859 a "prep" wrote to his parents: "Book Keeping is not taught in the institution but there is a commercial College where a person can be taught Book Keeping Writeing & the benefit of a lecture on business one hour each day. It takes a term to go through and it costs $25 but you receive a diploma that is worth $10 at least." Henry Prudden to parents, Aug. 20, 1859 (lent by Lilliam Prudden, New Haven, Conn.).

[55]*Lorain County News,* Mar. 29, Sept. 13 and 20, 1865, and *Catalogues* of the Commercial Institute for 1862, 1865, and 1865–66.

[56]*Lorain County News,* Sept. 12, Oct. 24, 1866.

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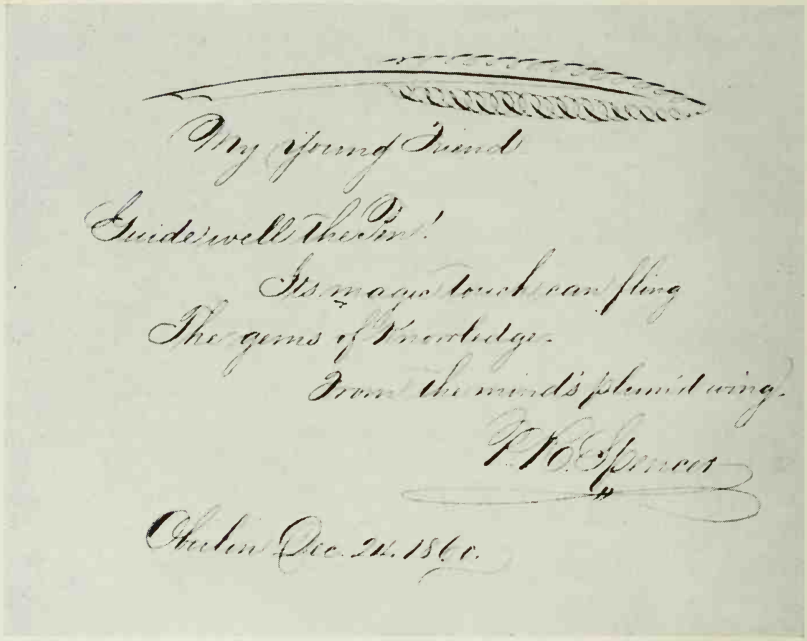



AUTOGRAPH OF PLATT ROGERS SPENCER, INVENTOR OF SPENCERIAN PENMANSHIP

(From an autograph album in the possession of Mrs. Henry H. Fuller, Ashland, Wisconsin)

appeared in the College *Catalogues* of 1860 to 1864 and again in 1865–66, but stopped after that. Apparently the close association ended on the latter date.

In 1866 the Institute included a commercial department, a telegraphic department, and a chirographic department. The full commercial course required from eighteen to twenty weeks and included "Business Customs and Correspondence," "Business Drill," "Political Economy," Commercial Arithmetic, Penmanship, Commercial Law, and "Physical, Mental and Moral culture." The full telegraphic course took from five to eight months and included "Practical Telegraphy," "Management of Batteries," "Telegraphic Bookkeeping," and "Theoretical Telegraphy." In the chirographic department the Drake brothers taught business and ornamental Spencerian penmanship, including "Off-Hand Flourishing, Old English, German And Church Text." The influence of the College is to be seen in the rules against using tobacco, swearing and Sabbath breaking and in the provision for prayer meetings on Thursday and Friday evenings.[57]

In these early years the Commercial or Business Institute bore about the same relation to the College as did the Conservatory of Music. Students very often took courses in both the College and the Institute. The Conservatory, however, grew *into* the College, whereas the business school grew *away from* it. Otherwise, business training as a part of higher education might have begun in Oberlin rather than at the University of Pennsylvania.

As an aid to the development of character and to make school work more attractive, training in music, especially vocal music, was urged. William Woodbridge was greatly impressed by the appreciation of music which he found among all classes of the German people and the emphasis on musical instruction in the schools of Pestalozzi and Fellenberg. Though disgusted with the "fascinating but corrupting strains of the Opera and the overpowering chants of the Vatican" he was completely persuaded that music was a great aid to true piety and a prime means of elevation and improvement.[58] Lowell Mason took up the task of introducing the teaching of music in the schools of the United

[57]*Circular of Calkins, Griffin & Co's Union Business Institute—1866* (Oberlin—1866).

[58]W. C. Woodbridge, "On Vocal Music as a Branch of Common Education," *American Annals of Education*, III, 193–212 (May, 1833). See "Music in Education" in Monroe, *Cyclopedia of Education*.

States. In 1832, in association with George James Webb, he founded the Boston Academy of Music. In this institution he taught music to Boston children free of charge, according to the Pestalozzian method. Four years later he began his convention or institute for the training of music teachers. In his little *Manual of the Boston Academy for Instruction in the Elements of Vocal Music, on the System of Pestalozzi,* published in 1839, he presented the arguments for teaching music to children: "It improves the voice . . . conduces to health . . . tends to improve the heart . . . tends to produce social order and happiness in a family . . . [and] is intellectual and disciplinary." "The effects of a suitable style of music in connection with judicious words," he declared, "is now to some extent well known. It tends to produce love to teachers, love to mates, love to parents, and love to God; kindness to dumb animals, and an observance of the works of nature and of the events of Providence; and leads the mind 'through nature up to nature's God.' "[59] Here was another great aid in the struggle for the reformation of the world.

The story of the development of music teaching in Oberlin will be reserved for a separate chapter.

The content of a college course should be elevating, conducive to piety, and practical. Was the old curriculum all of these things? Was this true of the Odyssey?—of Euripides?—of Ovid?—of Horace? The answer given by many reformers was "Obviously not." Many of the "classics" ordinarily studied in a college course were not only pagan but positively immoral. If the main purpose of education was to develop high moral character and stimulate piety, the portions of classical Greek and Latin literature usually included in the college curriculum were, for the most part, ineffective and even harmful. Likewise, their study was of little practical value and the attention given to them was, generally speaking, a waste of precious energy. This time and energy would much better be spent, said some, on elevating Christian, practical writings. The Bible was, they thought, neglected. Why should not the students study the original Greek of the New Testament rather than the sophisticated, heathen Greek classics? Would it not be more important to understand Hebrew, in order to be able to read the Old Testament in the

[59]Lowell Mason, *Manual* (Boston—1839), 18–23.

original, than Latin, which was of no fundamental use to the Christian scholar or clergyman? If Latin must be studied let Christian moral writings replace the pagan, immoral ones. But were there not classics in English worthy of careful study which were, at the same time, Christian and moral? Instead of Virgil or Horace let American students read *Paradise Lost* or Cowper's poems.

Thomas Smith Grimké, of the famous reformer family of that name of South Carolina, was the chief spokesman of this viewpoint. In addresses and printed pamphlets and books he presented his arguments against the heathen classics to educators and Christians throughout the Union. The Bible, said he, is the great classic, and its study in the original and in translation should occupy the position of greatest prominence in the college curriculum. Weed out the dangerous, pagan writings, he exhorted, and put the Hebrew, Greek and English versions of revealed Christian truth in their place.[60]

In most colleges and theological schools this was looked upon as heresy. The Yale *Report on the Course of Instruction,* prepared by President Jeremiah Day in 1827, represents the majority, conservative attitude. The study of the Latin and Greek classics, said the Yale President, was of basic importance as the best means of "mental discipline." A knowledge of Latin was essential to those intending to enter any of the professions. The ancient classics furnished the most satisfactory standard of literary taste. No man could be said to be really educated, held the conservatives, if he did not know the accepted classics in the original Greek and Latin. In the middle fifties a report on curriculum prepared by the faculty of the University of Alabama shows that the prevailing favorable attitude toward the traditional classical studies still continued.[61] It was only young institutions of doubtful scholarly character that actually experimented with a reformation.

In 1834, by the initiative of Beriah Green, the Oneida Institute of Science and Industry at Whitesboro, N. Y., struck all

[60]Thomas S. Grimké, *Reflections on the Character and Objects of All Science and Literature* . . . (New Haven—1831).

[61]*Reports on the Course of Instruction of Yale College* . . . (New Haven—1828); Louis F. Snow, *The College Curriculum in the United States* (New York—1907), 145 *et seq.,* and *Report on a Proposition to Modify the Plan of Instruction in the University of Alabama* . . . (New York—1855).

Latin out of the curriculum and substituted Hebrew for it. Instead of Homer the students at Oneida were to read the New Testament and selections from the Septuagint. In the same year a special joint committee of trustees and faculty at Western Reserve College investigated "the subject of studying the Bible and Christian Authors, as Classics in College, instead of Heathen Authors." The shadow of old Yale, however, kept the ancient curriculum intact in the new Yale of the West.[62] Oberlin, as was to be expected, followed the example of Oneida.

Shipherd, Asa Mahan and the many former Oneida students deserve about equal credit (or blame) for the establishment of the reformed, Christian curriculum at Oberlin. The *First Report,* as prepared by Shipherd and published in the autumn of 1834 when the first students were received into the Collegiate Department, expressed the intention of "substituting Hebrew and sacred classics for the most objectionable pagan authors." A few years later, when the Founder was planning another "collegiate institute" in Michigan, he provided for a course of study "of a decidedly *christian* character, exclusive of demoralizing pagan authors."[63] Mahan was always a staunch contender against the "heathen classics." He devoted his inaugural address in 1835 to an attack upon them. "He objected to the present plan of studying the Latin and Greek Classics (more especially the Latin), in a Collegiate Course. He believed it to be better adapted to educate heathen, as such, than Christians. He believed the mind could be disciplined as well by the study of Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. . . . Instead of spending so much time on the classics, he would have students acquire a knowledge of the natural sciences, of American law, of History, of men and things. He would fill their mind with truth, facts, practical, available knowledge."[64] The young men from Oneida, encouraged by Mahan, kept student sentiment stirred up against the classics. In 1837 one class was considering petitioning the faculty to eliminate Latin entirely. "If we should petition," wrote one of them, "I think we would accomplish our object, as the President is

[62]*Sketch of the Conditions and Prospects of the Oneida Institute* (Utica—1834); *Ohio Observer,* Oct. 9, 1834, quoted in H. A. Haring, "The Ohio Observer and Western Reserve College" *Western Reserve Bulletin,* XI, 48 (May—Nov., 1908).

[63]Lagrange Collegiate Institute. Shipherd's prospectus in the *New York Evangelist,* Apr. 22, 1837.

[64]*Ohio Observer,* July 9, 1835.

strongly opposed to Latin."[65] Almost certainly the Oneida students were responsible for the public burning of a number of copies of classical texts, which was so widely and unfavorably reported in the religious papers. Two years later a group of "Oneidas" went on strike temporarily because a Hebrew text that they were supposed to use contained explanations and translations in Latin. Two of them, it is said, even took the Oberlin bookseller to task "for bringing such a book with Latin translations of Scripture in it, into town."[66]

The Oberlin course did not exclude Latin entirely at any time. In 1839 the number of pages required in the College Course was only a little over eight hundred, however, as compared with thirteen hundred at Yale. In Oberlin, Plautus, Seneca, Livy and Horace were entirely omitted, and gave way to the more Christian but possibly less pure language of Hugo Grotius' *De Veritate Religionis Christianae* and George Buchanan's *Psalms*. This change was probably not so absurd as outsiders and later generations at Oberlin have supposed. Grotius was a brilliant Latinist and his *De Veritate* was long the accepted Protestant manual of apologetics. Its broad, non-sectarian character fitted well with the liberal Oberlin theology. The Scotch scholar's Latin, metrical version of the Psalms has, in recent years, been called "a wonderful achievement" and his work, in general, described as equal to that of the minor classical writers such as Seneca and Manilius.[67] The chief difficulty with this book was that it was out of print in Scotland and the Institute could not afford to have it reprinted.[68] The Oberlin curriculum included smaller amounts from the usual Greek classical authors but, in addition, required the reading of three hundred pages from the original New Testament. Among studies given at Oberlin and not at Yale it is interesting to note "Lowth on Hebrew Poetry," "Cousin's Psychology," Anatomy and Physiology, Cowper's Poems, Milton's Poems, "Science and Art of Sacred Music," and "Lessons in English Bible once a week." The study of Hebrew was, of course, required—"one recitation a day through one third of the Junior,

[65]Davis Prudden to George Prudden, May 23, 1837 (Prudden MSS).
[66]J. P. Cowles in the *Cleveland Observer*, Nov. 13, 1839.
[67]F. A. Wright and T. A. Sinclair, *History of Later Latin Literature* (New York—1931), 382–386.
[68]F. M., Feb. 4, 1840, and Leonard-Fairchild MS., I, 12–13.

and the whole of the Senior year." It was optional at Yale and most other orthodox colleges.[69]

A committee, made up of John J. Shipherd, Professor Henry Cowles and Professor Morgan, declared that they believed the Oberlin curriculum, though different, was at least as good as "that of any other college or seminary in our land." They continued: "It proceeds on the ground that the poetry of God's inspired prophets, is better for the *heart,* and at least as good for the head, as that of Pagans—that Isaiah and Jeremiah, Job and David, are preferable to Homer and Virgil, Horace and Ovid. Are we christians, and shall we doubt it? And not doubting it, shall we act as if we thought the tasteful emanations of heathen genius could impart a diviner light to the mind, and a nobler warmth to the heart than the inspirations of the Holy Ghost? . . . We should like to have every classic read, whose pages do not breathe the spirit of murder and lust; but as we would have the God of love and purity prosper us, we dare not put corrupting books into our young men's hands."[70]

Students, of course, were converted to this point of view and, in turn, preached it to their friends. Davis Prudden wrote from Oberlin in 1837 to a brother then in Yale:

"Never will I enter the so long venerated walls of Yale or any other eastern College, while the door is open to a course of study so admirably adapted for the improving and training of the mind as is pursued here. You may extol & exalt to the skies Yale steeped in heathen classics. But grant that I may breathe in the pure, celestial air of the sacred literature & drink deep at the fountain of natural science & I will not envy the lofty air & exalted name of Yalense. Shall those who are preparing for the ministry steep themselves completely in the polluted streams that flow from the heathen Classics? The poetry of the bible far exceeds any thing that uninspired man has yet obtained, in grandeur & loftiness. Why not study this thoroughly in the original tongue & by this means become entirely imbued with its spirit."[71]

The first and most colorful of the teachers of Hebrew in Oberlin was Joshua Seixas. He was a descendant of one of the oldest Jewish families in America, his grandfather, Isaac Seixas, having

[69]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Nov. 6, 1839, and 1839 *Catalogue.*
[70]*Ibid.,* Apr. 10, 1839.
[71]Davis [and Nancy] Prudden to George Prudden, Apr. 8, 1837 (Prudden MSS).

come to America from Portugal in 1730. His father was the famous Rabbi Gershom Mendez Seixas, the minister of the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish congregation in New York City at the time of the Revolution, and a loyal and influential patriot. Joshua, born about 1800, became a teacher of, and writer on, the Hebrew language. It is not known where he received his education; one would suppose at Columbia, as his father was a trustee, but the printed records of the University do not include his name. He attracted considerable attention by undertaking to give a reading knowledge of Hebrew in six weeks, classes meeting one hour a day. In New York, in Philadelphia, in Washington, at Princeton Theological Seminary, at the Seminary at New Brunswick, New Jersey, and at Andover Theological Seminary, he conducted classes, his testimonials say, with much success.[72] He was the author of a *Manual Hebrew Grammar,* published in 1833 and revised in the following year, which was used in his classes. The second edition was even recommended to those who might care to learn the language without a teacher! A reviewer in the *Christian Examiner* of Boston gave the text "unqualified commendation." It appealed, of course, to the well-known American desire for shortcuts to learning.[73]

Shipherd brought "Professor" Seixas to Oberlin in the summer of 1835, and soon one hundred and twenty-seven pupils were pursuing his course "with animated zeal and decided success." The learned Hebraist brought with him all the Hebrew Bibles he could find in New York and a large supply of his own grammars, twelve of which are still in the Oberlin Library. A son, James Seixas, was born in Oberlin in October and, soon after, the father was called to initiate the students at Western Reserve at Hudson

[72]Testimonials printed on one page of a letter: J. Seixas to Shipherd, May 29, 1835 (Treas. Off., File H).

[73]J. Seixas, *A Manual Hebrew Grammar for the Use of Beginners* (Andover—1833 and a second edition in 1834). Reviews in *Christian Examiner and General Review,* XV (n.s. X), 65–69 (Sept., 1833), and XVIII (n.s. XIII), 160–166 (May, 1835). I am informed by the historian of the Seixas family, Hon. N. Taylor Phillips of New York City (N. Taylor Phillips, "The Levy and Seixas families of Newport and New York" in the *Publications* of the American Jewish Historical Society, No. 4), in a letter of Sept. 20, 1933, that Seixas used both the names: "Joshua" and "James." This accounts for the fact that Oberlin records call him Joshua (P. C. M., July 14, 1835, and Treasurer's Ledger, No. 1, page 308) while the bibliographers call him James (O. S. Roorback, *Catalogue of American Publications,* 1820–1852 [New York—1852], and S. Austin Allibone, *Critical Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors . . .* [Philadelphia—1872], 3 vols.).

into the mysteries of Hebrew.[74] Late in January, 1836, he went from Hudson to Kirtland, where he received three hundred and fifty dollars for instructing the Mormon Elders for seven weeks in the tongue of the earlier prophets (a task which, it would seem, Joseph Smith's magic spectacles should have made unnecessary). The Prophet Joseph often talked with him and was very favorably impressed.[75]

There seems to be no doubt that Joshua Seixas was a man of real learning[76] and, though certainly rather eccentric in the classroom, an effective teacher. A student in one of his classes at Western Reserve College wrote of him: "I never saw any man talk and have so much to say as Mr. Seixas in recitation in my life," and again: "I am well satisfied that he is a man of great learning."[77] "You recollect how Seixas used to *drill* us—that laughter loving man," wrote James H. Fairchild a few years later.[78] He was possessed of some musical talent and, after his return to New York City, founded the first organized choir of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue where he also served for many years as chief instructor in Hebrew. He died in New York some time in the seventies.[79]

In later years the Hebrew classes were passed about from one instructor to another. Among those who taught them at various

[74]1835 *Catalogue*, 19; T. M., May 29, 1835; P. C. M., July 14, Nov. 28 and 30, 1835; Seixas to Shipherd, May 29, 1835 (Treas. Off., File H); *Ohio Observer*, Jan. 7, 1836, quoted in H. A. Haring, *Loc. Cit.*, 151; Seixas to Burnell, Jan. 12, 1836, and his bill for teaching, Nov. 30, 1835 (Misc. Archives) .

[75]Joseph Smith and Heman C. Smith, *History of the Churches of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* (Lamoni, Iowa—1911), II, 4, 19, 24. One Oberlin student, Lorenzo Snow, followed Seixas to Kirtland and was there converted to Mormonism.—Eliza R. Snow Smith, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow* (Salt Lake City—1884), 3–7.

[76]The papers of the Professor Moses Stuart at Andover contained in 1914 letters from Seixas pointing out omissions, giving corrections, etc., for Stuart's *Grammar*. Copy of a paper by "Dr. Pool" delivered at the meeting of the American Jewish Historical Society in February, 1914, lent by Mr. Edward D. Coleman to Mr. J. L. Rubin of the Library of Congress and by him to the author.

[77]MS Journal of John Buss, Freshman in Western Reserve College, 1835–36, a copy lent by Dr. Frederick C. Waite to J. L. Rubin and by him to the author.

[78]J. H. Fairchild to Mary Kellogg, June 2, 1840 (Fairchild MSS), and *Grandfather's Story, An Autobiography of James Harris Fairchild* (Oberlin—[c 1906]), 20–21. Fairchild says that the correct pronunciation of Seixas is "Sayshius."

[79]Information furnished by N. Taylor Phillips to J. L. Rubin and by him to the author, and letter from Seixas' granddaughter, Blanche Moses of New York City, to the author, Oct., 1933. In 1934 the author furnished references on Seixas to Leroi C. Snow, through the office of Secretary George M. Jones, for Mr. Snow's article entitled "Who was Professor Joshua Seixas?" in *The Improvement Era* (Salt Lake City) vol. 39, No. 2 (Feb., 1936).

times were John P. Cowles, Henry Cowles, William Hoisington, James H. Fairchild, Charles Penfield, and John Morgan.

In the forties there was some feeling that Oberlin had not gone far enough, that all the "Heathen Classics" ought to be dropped. At a meeting of the trustees in 1841 a resolution was introduced by Father Shipherd and carried "that the Faculty be earnestly requested to re-consider with much prayer & deliberation the great question 'Ought not the time devoted to the study of the Heathen Classics to be improved in the study of the Holy Scripture & Natural Science?' "[80] On at least three different occasions students applied to the faculty for permission to graduate without Latin "in consequence of weak eyes" or for other reasons. On each occasion the faculty consented. But when a certain Daniels "requested the privilege of graduating without the study of Hebrew," his request was refused! In 1845 the trustees resolved "that no Student shall be denied the approbation of College at the end of his course by reason of any want of knowledge in the heathen classics, provided he sustains well an examination in other branches needful to prepare him for his great work of preaching Christ & Him Crucified."[81] Latin, for all practical purposes, was therefore eliminated for the time being from the required courses in the curriculum.

From the very beginning there was some opposition to the "new curriculum." John F. Scovill and Seth Waldo, the first teachers in the academic department, did not approve. John Morgan was at least cool.[82] Professor John P. Cowles denounced the new course in no uncertain terms and defended the ancient classics in public addresses in Oberlin, itself. Cowles was at a loss to see how Milton's poems could possibly be used in so advanced a class as the third year of college. Nothing could ever be made, said he, of a course in English Poetry! If the Greek and Latin classics were left out of the curriculum, what else, he asked, could the students possibly find worthy of substituting for them?[83] The burning of the classics brought down a flood of abuse on Oberlin from all quarters of the scholastic world. In 1839 the American

[80]T. M., Aug. 23, 1841.

[81]F. M., Sept. 17, 1838; Feb. 12, 1840; May 13, 1841; June 21, 1843, and T. M., Aug. 29, 1845.

[82]Scovill to Shipherd, Nov. 20, 1833 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS), and the *Ohio Observer,* July 9, 1835.

[83]Cowles' letters in the *Cleveland Observer,* July 24, Nov. 6 and 20, 1839.

Education Society refused to give further aid to students at Oberlin, nominally because of the deficiency in the classical course at the Institute.

From 1840 to 1860 the Oberlin curriculum changed gradually from peculiarity to conformity, the process being speeded up by the elimination of the chief exponents of the new curriculum: Shipherd (who died in 1844), and Mahan (who "resigned" in 1850). In 1841 "Cowper's Poems" disappears from the *Catalogue;* in 1843 Milton and Buchanan's *Psalms* drop out. Grotius' *De veritate* was discontinued after 1846. In the fifties Hebrew was first made optional (1852) and then (in 1858) dropped entirely from the College Course.[84] In the same decade the classical course was strengthened by the addition of Livy, of Homer's Odyssey, and, finally in 1859, of Horace! In 1861 we find a student writing a fulsome eulogy of the classics in the *Monthly*.[85] By that time Oberlin College required at least as advanced and as extensive work in Latin and Greek as its rival, Western Reserve, or Amherst in the East. Some of Oberlin's curricular peculiarities did not disappear, however. The study of the Bible in English was never given up. Increased emphasis, in fact, was placed on it in the fifties with the discontinuance of the reading of the Old Testament in the original Hebrew.[86] Some study of the Bible was required of all students in Oberlin College from the beginning down to recent years.

[84]T. M., Aug. 26, 1852, and Aug. 19, 1858.
[85]*Oberlin Students' Monthly,* III, 152–153 (Mar., 1861).
[86]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Aug. 30, 1854, and "Faculty Report" in *Ibid.,* Aug. 15, 1855.

## CHAPTER XXIV

# *JOINT EDUCATION OF THE SEXES*[1]

IN THE *Circular* of March, 1834, Shipherd declared that one of the prominent objects "of the school shall be the elevation of female character, bringing within the reach of the misjudged and neglected sex, all the instructive privileges which hitherto have unreasonably distinguished the leading sex from theirs."

If it was important to educate youths and infants in order to improve society it was even more fundamental to educate the mothers who would perforce give the children much of their early training. "No effort is perhaps more important," declared Woodbridge, "than to educate that sex who are destined to give the infant mind its first impression." Philo P. Stewart, Shipherd's associate in the founding of Oberlin, wrote to Secretary Levi Burnell in 1837: ". . . I believe that there is no other way to secure success in our great moral enterprises, than to make prevalent the right kind of female education."[2]

An able group of American theorists, beginning with Dr. Benjamin Rush of Philadelphia, had written and spoken on the necessity of a more thorough education for females. Notable among them were De Witt Clinton, T. H. Gallaudet, Emma Willard, and Catharine Beecher. William Russell in his *American Journal of Education* and his successor, William C. Woodbridge, who changed the name of the periodical to the *American Annals of Education,* wrote in favor of the education of women and ac-

[1]Much of the material in this chapter has been previously published by the author under the title "Oberlin and Co-Education" in the *Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly,* XLVII, 1–19 (Jan., 1938). See also R. S. Fletcher and E. H. Wilkins, *The Beginning of College Education for Women and of Coeducation on the College Level,* Oberlin College, *Bulletin* (Mar. 20, 1937), and R. S. Fletcher, "The First Coeds," *The American Scholar* (New York), VII, 78–93 (Winter, 1938), reprinted in H. G. Platt, Jr., and P. G. Perrin, *Current Expressions of Fact and Opinion* (Chicago—c. 1941), 175–182.

[2]*American Annals of Education,* I, 4–5 (Aug., 1830), and P. P. Stewart to Levi Burnell, Apr. 10, 1837 (Treas. Off., File I).

cepted many articles on the subject by others. All of them stressed the social significance of women as the teachers of the race, whether in the family circle or in the school. Women, they insisted, were especially adapted to teach by their greater patience and gentleness. They ought therefore to be trained as teachers and if unmarried, and so having no children of their own to teach, they might instruct in schools and release men to occupations for which they alone were qualified.[3] The "elevation of female character" by education was one chief means by which the whole race was to be elevated.

While the theorists were rationalizing the movement an even larger group were engaging in actual experiments in teaching "females." Back in the eighteenth century some female academies had existed and a number of academies accepted both girls and boys. None of these institutions, however, did much to stimulate female education elsewhere. But in the early nineteenth century there appeared a number of teachers whose influence, through their pupils and the example of their respective schools, was far reaching: Joseph Emerson at Byfield, Saugus, and Wethersfield, Emma Willard at Troy, Zilpah Grant at Ipswich, Catharine Beecher at Hartford, and Mary Lyon at Ipswich and Mt. Holyoke. These were the teachers who formulated the accepted plan of female education of that period, which included emphasis on moral and religious education, training in domestic science and economy, and preparation for teaching. If women were to be prepared to mold the infant mind, to bring about through education the salvation of mankind, and at the same time to preside with success over their domestic establishments and be the pious and intelligent companions of their husbands these were the considerations which should receive first place. The merely ornamental accomplishments, much emphasized in some female seminaries, were frowned upon by these leaders; young women were to be educated primarily for "future usefulness," *i.e.* for the salvation of the world and the establishment of the Millennium. In commenting on the words of the Psalmist's prayer that their "daughters may be corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace," Joseph Emerson told his pupils: "Much is meant by this. Females are the foundation of society; they need some

[3]Thomas Woody, *History of Women's Education in the United States* (New York—1929) is invaluable. See I, 301–338; 342 *et seq.*, and 397 *et seq.*

judgment, energy, and vigor. They may be, and ought to be also, polished. The education of both sexes is committed to them. In half a century society must be composed of such as have been educated in great measure by females."[4]

From Joseph Emerson's school came Zilpah Polly Grant (Banister), later of Ipswich, Mary Lyon, founder of Mount Holyoke, and Alice Welch (Cowles) of Oberlin. Zilpah Polly Grant, assisted for a while by Mary Lyon, was in charge of the famous Ipswich Female Seminary at Ipswich, Massachusetts, from 1828 to 1839. Emerson was the teacher and inspirer of Miss Grant, Miss Lyon and Mrs. Cowles. Miss Grant, next to Emerson, "molded, trained, informed, and inspired" Miss Lyon and greatly influenced Mrs. Cowles, her cousin's wife.[5] Marianne Parker (Dascomb) graduated from Ipswich under Miss Grant and Miss Lyon in 1833. Alice Welch Cowles and Marianne Parker Dascomb were the great principals of the Female Department at Oberlin in the first forty years of its existence. Mrs. Cowles as Principal from 1836 to 1840 and Mrs. Dascomb, whose association with the school as member of the Ladies' Board and as Principal covered a period of forty-four years, brought the ideas of their distinguished teachers and associates to Oberlin and firmly established them there.[6]

Oberlin's peculiar contribution to female education was the admission of young ladies to the complete college course and "joint education of the sexes" for students of college grade. Now there was nothing unusual about educating boys and girls together in academies and seminaries; at least two "coeducational" academies had been founded in the eighteenth century. The practice had crept up from the dame school, often for reasons of economy. When it was decided to include a Collegiate Department in the plan of the Institute a Female Department was es-

[4]L. T. Guilford, *The Use of a Life: Memorials of Mrs. Z. P. Grant Banister* (New York [1885?]), 42–43.

[5]Miss Grant was the cousin of Professor Henry Cowles of Oberlin (who married Alice Welch) and Prof. John P. Cowles, who was dismissed from Oberlin in 1839 and became head of Ipswich in 1844.

[6]Woody, *Op. Cit.*, I, 342–351; John P. Cowles, "Miss Z. P. Grant—Mrs. William B. Banister" in Barnard's *American Journal of Education*, XXX (n.s. V), 611–624; Obituary of "Mrs. Marianne P. Dascomb" in *Oberlin Weekly News*, Apr. 11, 1879; E. B. Huntington, Mrs. Marianne P. Dascomb in *Eminent Women of the Age* (Hartford—1868), 290. Mrs. Dascomb's background is indicated from the fact that her father, Deacon D. H. Parker, was secretary of the Dunbarton (N.H.) Anti-Slavery Society.—(*Emancipator*, Aug. 19, 1834.)

tablished alongside it, in which was to be furnished "instruction in the *useful* branches taught in the best Female Seminaries." It was evidently intended that most, if not all, young ladies should take this course. It is notable, however, that when the first college classes were begun in the autumn of 1834, members of the Female Department participated in some of them and thus, for the first time, college students shared their classrooms and class instruction with women.[7] So "coeducation" spread from secondary education to higher education as it had climbed from the dame schools to the academies.

In 1835 young ladies were received into the Institute to the number of about a fourth of the whole with results satisfactory to the administrators and teachers. John Keep wrote to Gerrit Smith that, "The young ladies about 60 to 80 all appear well, & do well—& the uniting of the sexes on the Oberlin plan of education gains in popularity." Mrs. Cowles, the Female Principal, listed in her notebook under

"Peculiar advantages:

"Mutually stimulating each other.

"Young gentlemen converse on important subjects with ladies educated in the same classes with themselves.

"Ladies become educated who never would have been on other systems."[8]

In March of 1836 the faculty were invited to meet with the Board of Trustees and presented "the result of their experience in relation to the effect of placing young gentlemen and Ladies under the same system of instruction & discipline":

"After a detailed exhibition of facts and the results of personal observation in reference to the effect of the system upon the manners of young gentlemen—upon the manners and especially the modesty of young ladies, and in general upon whatever pertains to purity, propriety and progress in all desirable improvement; and other gentlemen of the Institute having sustained the views of the Faculty by pertinent facts, it was

"*Resolved* That after more than two years experience in the

[7]This is implied in the *First Annual Report of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute* (Elyria, 1834), 6, but the *Catalogue* for 1835 states specifically: "They [the young ladies] attend recitations with young men in all departments [page 24]."

[8]J. Keep to Gerrit Smith, Oct. 14, 1836 (Gerrit Smith MSS), and Alice M. Cowles, "Notebook," Nov. 1, 1836 (Cowles-Little MSS).

plan of Uniting a male and female department in the same Institute we are amply sustained in the opinion that the mutual influence of the sexes upon each other is decidedly happy in the cultivation of both mind & manners, and that its effect in promoting real virtue and in correcting the irregularities, frivolities & follies common to youth is unquestionably beneficial.

"*Resolved* Also that our experience shows satisfactorily that under proper management, no serious evil, but much good will result from carrying out the same principle, viz. That of associating the Sexes,—which lies at the basis of the very idea of human Society; which God himself has inserted in its structure—which mankind have almost universally admitted—and the exceptions to which, as in the case of monasteries and nunneries have been attended with unparallelled and most disgusting licentiousness."[9]

Of course, the system was viewed with some suspicion by outsiders, many suspecting that it approximated free love. Said Lyman Beecher: ". . . This Amalgamation of sexes won't do. If you live in a Powder House you blow up once in a while." Delazon Smith, a disgruntled student, charged in his "History of Oberlin" (1837) that the close association of male and female students led to many cases of moral delinquency, that matrimonial engagements were quickly made and broken and that the attention of some ladies was largely distracted from their studies thereby. As late as 1858 a writer in the *New York Evangelist* characterized the association of the sexes in colleges as a "rash experiment," which imperiled the innocence of young ladies and outraged the "common sense of fathers and mothers, and the wise instincts of the female mind."[10]

In 1845 a special committee, consisting of Amasa Walker, Henry Cowles and the wife of President Mahan, presented a "Report on Educating the Sexes together" in which they recognized that the system was attended with certain

*"Evils*

"1. A tendency to spend too much time & to be too much engrossed in each others society. This tendency makes it necessary to adopt specific rules respecting calls, visits, late hours, study

[9]T. M., Mar. 9, 1836.

[10]J. S. Hudson quoting Beecher in a letter to Levi Burnell, Mar. 19, 1839 (Treas. Off., File D), and the *New York Evangelist* quoted in the *Oberlin Evangelist,* Aug. 4, 1858. The *New York Evangelist* departed greatly from its liberal origins in later years.

hours, walking out in the evening, rides into the country &c &c.

"These rules are imposed with more strictness upon the young ladies than upon the young men. The latter often resist their action upon the young ladies, speak of these regulations with contempt, the results of which are very unhappy, & obedience on the part of the young ladies is secured with great difficulty.

"2. A second great evil is early matrimonial engagements. These result sometimes in violation of this engagement; and usually in a great absorption of time & thought, in a decline of piety, distaste for study, & impaired usefulness."

The committee insisted that they were not "discouraged from still prosecuting our plan of educating the sexes together," that they deemed "the good results very valuable," but that the evils were "such as should admonish us of the . . . necessity of some immediate & efficient remedy." They suggested that the young ladies ought all to be concentrated in the boarding house under the immediate eye of the Lady Principal, rather than in private families, and that lectures should be delivered in an attempt to create a "more healthy public sentiment touching these points."[11]

Mrs. Cowles, when she was Principal of the Female Department, had regularly talked to the young women on such subjects as "Early Engagements" etc. It is presumed that Mrs. Dascomb and other principals continued the work at "General Exercises." Professor Cowles occasionally talked to the young men on manners and morals, discussing "the necessity of a wise & careful control of the youthful feelings & affections, not only in their social relations among themselves, but with the other sex."[12] Professor Finney also sometimes discussed associated subjects in his lectures on Pastoral Theology. As a general rule long engagements were frowned upon and, therefore, it was not deemed expedient for young gentlemen to enter into them until they had at least entered the Theological Course. It is clear that marriage "at proper age, under fitting circumstances," was "approved, not condemned" and that "engagements, not having prospectively long time to run, and in other respects proper," were "not considered, or found to be, an evil."

[11]"Report on Educating the Sexes together, adopted August, 1845" (Misc. Archives).

[12]James Fairchild to Mary Kellogg, Aug. 21–29 (Fairchild MSS), partly printed in the *Oberlin Alumni Magazine,* 31 (Nov., 1904).

The Oberlin point of view is well stated in an article which appeared in the *Evangelist* in the middle fifties:

"We take it the golden mean lies in so shaping the association of young gentlemen with young ladies as to make its general tone elevated and pure; the topics of conversation solid, not vapid; more sensible than sentimental; and drawn from the realms of literature, science and morals, rather than from the limbo of Vanity. Similar studies, common recitations, the daily measuring of mental strength, conduce greatly to the practical impression on each sex that the other are to be held and deemed as intellectual and social beings. The relation of beau and belle is in good measure displaced by the more healthful one of fellow-student. The idea that the young lady is a toy or a plaything is very thoroughly exploded by the practical working of intellectual competition on the College race ground,—to say nothing of the influence of that higher nobler Christian life, in which united efforts for the salvation of souls deeply engross the heart."[13]

In the spring of 1836, the trustees had ruled on recommendation of the faculty, "That students be prohibited from forming the marriage connexion while members of this Institution," and the regulation has remained in force ever since. Immediately after Commencement, however, the *Evangelist* usually carried a long list of the weddings of embryo "Reverends."[14]

In the elementary courses, the young ladies and men were sometimes in separate classes but almost always met together in more advanced branches. President Fairchild believed that this arrangement afforded a "wholesome incitement to study," the members of one sex being particularly anxious to appear to the best advantage before those of the opposite sex. As there were, at first, no course grades or honors in Oberlin, entire reliance was placed upon "the natural love of a fair standing with teachers and associates [including those of the other sex] as the supplement to higher motives for exertion."[15]

It has usually been said that the founders did not intend that

[13]*Oberlin Evangelist,* June 7, 1854.

[14]T. M., Mar. 9, 1836, and "Faculty Recommendations," Oct. 9, 1836 (Misc. Archives). See Louis D. Hartson, "Marriage Record of Alumnae for the First Century of a Coeducational College," *Journal of Heredity,* XXXI, 403–406 (Sept., 1940).

[15]J. H. Fairchild, "The Coeducation of the Sexes," Barnard's *American Journal of Education,* XVII, 385–400 (Jan., 1868).

any of the young ladies should take the Collegiate Course, but a statement prepared by Shipherd for the *Ohio Observer* in 1834 implies rather definitely that this was not the case. "We knew, moreover," he wrote, "that *female education* was grievously neglected and too generally of such a character, as to fit its subjects better for a place at the toilet with the *pretty trinkets* which were the fruits of their education, than to qualify them for happy and useful companionship in life; and as there was not a *female* manual Seminary; or a *female Collegiate Institution in the United States,* we felt that there were [was] yet unoccupied in the shades of Academus a wide area."[16] Anyway, in 1837 four ladies were admitted to the Collegiate Course with the men and in 1841 three of them received the A.B. degree, the first bona fide college degrees ever granted to women.

The faculty seems to have been divided on the question of the feasibility of young ladies taking the classical college course, however. Mahan was almost certainly favorable to the idea, but Morgan and Mrs. Cowles, the Lady Principal, seem to have opposed at first. Mary Hosford, one of the first three women to graduate, wrote to Mary Kellogg (Fairchild) a few months before the historic Commencement of 1841:

"The trials, perplexities and discouragements with which we met in our first year you are quite too well acquainted with. [Miss Kellogg had started the course with them, but dropped out.] The sophomore year was hardly less difficult. We seemed destined to days, and nights even, of toil and fatigue. But these last two years have been fraught with comfort and pleasure, and we have succeeded beyond our own expectations. Often do I look back to the time when so many, who occupied the most influential stations in the school, stood out against the course we were pursuing, and especially the unkind coldness and indifference of her to whom we would look for sympathy and counsel, and contrast with our situation, with our incentives to take the course which seemed best to us, the situation and incentives to action which are laid before those who are behind us. Most of the faculty are now in favor of [women taking] the college course, and Mrs. Cowles is advising all those young ladies who have strength and means, to take a thorough course!

[16] J. J. S. in the *Ohio Observer,* July 17, 1839.

Sometimes I feel like weeping tears of joy over those dear young ladies who are now making their way through the same path that we have trod, peaceful and unmolested. After the catalogue was issued last fall, Mrs. Cowles met us on the side-walk, and took us by the hand, and shed over us some of the sweetest tears you ever saw, and instead of discouraging us as she had done formerly, gave us a 'be of good courage' and 'onward.' " Mary Hosford apparently was quite conscious of her historic role as a pioneer woman college graduate.[17]

It was not in the classroom, however, but in the social intercourse centering about the boarding house table that the two sexes were brought in closest relation to each other. The promiscuous boarding table was the heart of joint education in Oberlin even down into the twentieth century. It was here that the boasted influence of the fair sex on the manners of the males was brought to bear. Professor John Morgan, doubtful as he was at first of the whole idea of joint education, admitted to his friend Mark Hopkins that "the young ladies manifestly exert a civilizing influence on the young men."[18] A visitor to Oberlin in 1836 wrote a letter to the *New York Evangelist* recording his impressions:

"In regard to bringing both sexes into the same table—and also in calling in the aid of the female scholars to perform all the labor for themselves and for others,—I will give you my impressions as I have received them, by spending two days in the place, and enjoying every facility both for inquiry and observation, which I could desire.

"The rooms for the young ladies are entirely distinct from the young men, and no young man is allowed to enter them. They have also a pleasant room for meetings and visits among themselves, devoted exclusively to their use. At the tables in the dining hall, there are about four young men to one young lady, and these are seated, usually, on one side of the table, 2 or 3 together, at regular intervals. Here they perform the same services for those within reach, as they would in a private family—and results have been happy.

"All the grossness and vulgarity so often witnessed in college commons is here excluded—and the matron informed me that

[17]Mary Hosford to Mary Kellogg, June 24, 1841 (Fairchild MSS).
[18]John Morgan to Mark Hopkins, June 8, 1836 (Morgan-Hopkins MSS).

if some new comers happened to manifest a disposition to coarseness, when placed beyond the immediate eye of the young ladies, the stationing of one or two of the most discreet near them, never failed at once to suppress it."[19]

The young men and women were separated in their manual labor, though the domestic labor performed by the latter brought them into rather "domestic" relations with the young men. They not only waited on table, but did the washing and mending for the men as well as for themselves, kept the rooms clean, and washed the dishes. It was the Oberlin ideal that the sexes should meet "in the same circumstances and with the same restraints that control the intercourse of young persons in well-regulated Christian families generally."[20] It was distinctly understood also that in such Christian families the man was the head of the household—and in Oberlin the male was often spoken of as "the leading sex."

There was no tendency to feminism. The only right demanded for women by the Oberlin leaders was "the right to be educated." (They seem to have failed entirely to realize that education would open to women the way to all the other privileges hitherto the exclusive property of the male.) To the question: "Is 'the woman question,' so called necessarily involved in your experiment?" an Oberlin spokesman replied in the *Evangelist:* "Not at all. Its doctrines *might* be taught here in theory or in practice, as elsewhere; or they might not be. Pupils may or may not hold or discuss these opinions, at their option. There is nothing in the system which trenches upon these questions necessarily. The first and greatest right of women—the right to be educated, as a being endowed with intelligence equally as man,—is fundamental to the system; beyond this it goeth not." Bearing this in mind, it is not surprising that, though the two sexes usually united in the same classes, "In those exercises which have for their direct object a preparation for public speaking and for public life the ladies take no part."[21]

[19]Anonymous letter from Oberlin dated Sept. 1, 1836, in the *New York Evangelist,* Oct. 1, 1836. See also Asa Mahan, *Autobiography* (London—1882), 266–267.

[20]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Dec. 3, 1851. See Ch. XXXIX.

[21]*Oberlin Evangelist,* June 7, 1854, and J. H. Fairchild, *Woman's Rights and Duties, A Lecture Delivered Before the Students of Oberlin Collegiate Institute, June, 1849* (Oberlin—1849), 33.

OBERLIN "FEMALE" STUDENTS OF THE LATE FIFTIES
(From a daguerreotype in the possession of Mr. J. T. Fairchild)

As the years went on Oberlinites became increasingly enthusiastic about "joint education," and it became an important part of the Oberlin Gospel. In 1851 it was officially reported that the results of the system were "cheering, beyond the most sanguine expectations." "The same teachers educate six hundred young gentlemen and young ladies at an expense to the public less than in most Colleges is incurred in educating two hundred young men. The female pupils enjoy privileges for mental culture of a higher order than are enjoyed by ladies, perhaps in any other one school in the world. The mutual, social and moral influence of the sexes has been highly salutary." Six years later Professor T. B. Hudson wrote to the *Independent:* "The joint education of the sexes has been here attended by the best results. . . . The manners of both sexes are improved by proper association. Better order prevails in all departments. Sickly sentimentalism is checked. A quiet and healthy emulation is supplied to each sex by the presence of the other in the same classes. Meanwhile, the ladies are educated to be *women,* and not *men.*" In 1862, it was still a source of great pride. A statement in the *Oberlin Evangelist* described the system in glowing terms. "Brothers and sisters are here on common platform of opportunities and facilities for education. They meet in the recitation room and at the table. Under wise social regulations, this system is proved to be fraught with many and great benefits, and liable to but few incidental evils. It enkindles emulation; puts each sex upon its best behavior; almost entirely expels from College those mean trickish exploits which so frequently deprave monastic College society, and develops in College all those humanizing, elevating influences which God provided for in the well-ordered association of the sexes together!"[22] The students seem to have been equally well satisfied. One young man wrote to an intercollegiate publication in 1860:

"Brothers in the monastic Colleges we pity you, but we think there is hope, if not for you, of your successors. The day of deliverance dawns. . . . Women are to be educated because we choose civilization rather than barbarism. Of course in the ages when women were practically regarded as soulless, there could be no joint education. Man was educated alone because there

[22]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Dec. 3, 1851; Oct. 8, 1862, and the *Independent,* Aug. 7, 1856; Jan. 22, 1857.

was nobody else to be educated. The old institutions of learning were not organized on such a basis that women could be admitted into them. Hence if women were to be educated at all, seminaries must be built for them. But when the civilized world comes to adjust itself properly to the new phase of human progress, the education of woman, the sexes will be educated together. . . . It is our happy experience, of a quarter of a century's growth, that it is better for both sexes to travel together along the paths of science. Womanhood becomes more beautiful, and manhood more strong and elevated, as they are brought out side by side in harmonious contrast. The principle, that it is not good for man or woman to be alone, is older than any monastic seminary of learning. Separate from each other, the sexes cannot be educated in the best and highest sense."[23]

He prophesied more truly than he or his readers could have guessed: "We read in the signs of the times, that in the next age the maiden shall, with her brother, con the classic page, and with him woo the muses in their sacred haunts. Be cheered by this promise of better things; God's plan as shown by the common nature, the likeness of himself which has impressed on man and woman, must succeed. God meant the joint education of the sexes. So it shall be. Our grandchildren will wonder why it was not always so." Even John Morgan, who, in 1835, wrote to Theodore Weld: "The mixing of young men & women together in the same institution strikes me as not at all judicious," was converted, and in 1872 bantered President Mark Hopkins on the failure of Williams to adopt coeducation. "I suppose," he wrote, "Williams is bound to be exclusive of ladies—a great mistake I think. But it may not last forever."[24]

Already, by 1867, several other American colleges had adopted "joint education." Two years before, Sophia Jex-Blake, the first British woman physician and a distinguished feminist, had written after a visit to Oberlin: "Whatever shortcomings or errors may be recorded against Oberlin, it should ever be remembered in her favor that she took the initiative before all the

[23]"Oberlin College" in the *University Quarterly*, II, 372–373 (Oct., 1860).

[24]Morgan to Theodore Weld, June 13, 1835 (Weld MSS), and Morgan to Mark Hopkins, Sept. 12, 1872 (Morgan-Hopkins MSS).

world in opening a college career to women."[25] In the next generation the propriety of college education for women was to become practically universally recognized in the United States, and, under the name of coeducation, the system of educating the sexes together was to conquer a great part of the American college world, even long established men's colleges in the East trembling in the balance.

[25]Sophia Jex-Blake, *A Visit to Some American Schools and Colleges* (New York—1867), 47, and the *Dictionary of National Biography, Twentieth Century,* 1912–21. On the later history of coeducation see below, pages 904–909.

# CHAPTER XXV

# *FREE SOIL AND THE UNDERGROUND*

"This College [Oberlin] is in Ohio, and is the greatest sinque of Free Soil iniquities this side of Vermont, New Hampshire and Hell."

Brownlow's *Knoxville Whig*, December 24, 1853, quoted in C. S. Ellsworth "Oberlin and the Anti-Slavery Movement up to the Civil War," 115.

" . . . Oberlin, that friendly light-house which guards the entrance to the harbour of British freedom."

Rev. C. E. Lester (a Negro) on June 18, 1840 in *Proceedings of the General Anti-Slavery Convention . . . held in London . . .* 1840 (London—1841), 321.

IN THE beginning the settlers and teachers at Oberlin were Whigs by conviction, tradition, and habit. Very early, however, they began to exercise their influence within the party in behalf of the slave. In 1835 they petitioned the Ohio legislature in behalf of the civil rights of colored persons. In 1838 the Oberlin Anti-Slavery Society bartered its support to a certain Whig candidate for the legislature for a written promise that he would attempt to abolish the Ohio "Black Laws." The Democrats attributed the defeat of their candidate to Oberlin. In 1839 the Lorain County Anti-Slavery Society, which was strongly impregnated with Oberlin influence, resolved, "That it is the duty [of] Abolitionists to use their influence to secure a nomination for office of men who are friends of Equal Rights, and to give their votes for such men."[1] Before the formation of the Liberty Party Oberlin was thus definitely committed to political action in behalf of the slave.

Oberlin's faith in the Whig party was severely shaken when many Whig members of the Ohio legislature, including the delegate elected by Oberlin votes, helped to pass a stringent state

[1] *Oberlin Evangelist*, July 31, 1839, and Ellsworth, *Op. Cit.*, 52, and 103–104, citing the *Ohio State Journal and Columbus Gazette*, Dec. 18, 1835; the *Ohio Atlas and Elyria Advertiser*, May 28, 1839; the *Philanthropist*, June 18, 1839, and the *Ohio Statesman* (Columbus), Oct. 19, 1838.

fugitive slave law, the famous "Black Act" of 1839.[2] As a result, when, at a special meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society held in Cleveland in October, the venerable Myron Holley of western New York, proposed the formation of a special anti-slavery political party, Oberlin delegates supported the proposal. President Mahan, Professor Finney, and Edward Wade, brother of Benjamin Wade and then "Professor of Law" at Oberlin, all spoke for it. "Rebel" H. B. Stanton wrote to Whittier that it was "one of the most interesting debates on political action" he had ever participated in.[3] The resolution was laid on the table but, when both Whig and Democratic candidates proved unsatisfactory to the abolitionists, an anti-slavery nominating convention was held at Albany (April, 1840), Alvan Stewart, the Finney convert, presiding and Joshua Leavitt acting as co-secretary. James G. Birney was nominated and the Liberty Party was launched.[4]

The *Evangelist* urged the friends of Oberlin to vote the Liberty ticket. H. C. Taylor was an active Liberty worker; Oberlinite M. E. Strieby was a Liberty Party elector for Ohio. In 1841 at the Liberty conventions at Akron and Columbus Oberlinites and Oberlin's friends were prominent among the delegates: H. C. Taylor, Dr. James Dascomb, L. D. Butts, Francis D. Parish of Sandusky City, J. M. Sterling of Cleveland, John Monteith of Elyria, Edward Wade, and O. K. Hawley of Austinburg. At the Columbus convention John Keep reported on English abolitionism as observed on his trip abroad.[5] The "Big Tent" was furnished free of charge for at least two Liberty Party conventions. Thus, from the beginning (though the Oberlin vote for Birney in 1840 was small) the Oberlin leaders gave their support to the anti-slavery third party and were followed by many friends and former students elsewhere.

The annexation of Texas and the Mexican War roused the ire of Oberlin men as of abolitionists everywhere. Oberlin was

[2]For the general political background see T. C. Smith, *The Liberty and Free Soil Parties in the Northwest* (New York—1897). C. S. Ellsworth has made a careful study of Oberlin's part in anti-slavery politics in his "Oberlin and the Anti-Slavery Movement up to the Civil War," a doctoral dissertation presented to the faculty of Cornell University in 1930. The author is much indebted to this thesis.

[3]*Philanthropist,* Nov. 19, 1839, and *passim.*

[4]*Ibid.,* May 5, 1840.

[5]R. V. Harlow, *Gerrit Smith,* 151, and *Philanthropist,* Oct. 28, 1840; Jan. 13, 27, Feb. 3, 1841.

ready for any sacrifices in order to prevent the spread of slavery into the new Western territories. A group of leading Oberlin citizens and professors declared, in a statement published in the summer of 1848, that, "The first and great aim of the friends of freedom at the present time should be . . . the total prevention of the extension of Slavery over any of the territories now under the jurisdiction of this Government."[6] President Mahan attended the Buffalo convention which organized the "Free Democracy" or Free Soil Party and nominated Martin Van Buren, the leader of the disgruntled Democrats called "Barnburners." He supported the action of that convention upon his return and most of the Oberlin men voted Free Soil in the Autumn.[7] In November, in one of his extempore supplications, Professor Finney prayed that Southern men would "spit in the dough-faces of the North."[8] Of course, Van Buren was overwhelmingly defeated and the Free Soil Party disintegrated, but the Oberlin vote brought about the election of Norton S. Townshend, one of the Institute's trustees, to the lower house of the Ohio legislature. Townshend controlled the balance of power between the Whigs and Democrats in that body and secured the repeal of the Ohio Black Laws and the election of Salmon P. Chase to the United States Senate! Here was at least one direct tangible result of the Oberlin participation in third party politics.[9]

The passage of the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850 and the Repeal of the Missouri Compromise in 1854 awakened the Yankees from Maine to Iowa to the menacing advance of the "slavocracy." The spontaneity of the movement which produced the Republican Party reflects the thoroughness of the preparation by anti-slavery societies, anti-slavery periodicals and anti-slavery schools, churches, and missionary associations. The Republican Party was the party primarily of the Yankees of New England—and of

[6]Ellsworth, *Op. Cit.*, 113, citing *Cleveland True Democrat,* Aug. 2, 1848.

[7]See Mahan's account of the convention—*Oberlin Evangelist,* Aug. 16, 1848. H. C. Taylor to Gerrit Smith, Jan. 15, 1849 (Gerrit Smith MSS)—"With the exception of Prof. Hudson they all voted for Van Buren last fall, . . ."

[8]Charles Penfield to Helen Cowles, Nov. 21, 1848 (Cowles MSS).

[9]T. C. Smith, *Op. Cit.,* 164–169. Further on Townshend see pages 356–360. Dr. Townshend was an operator on the Underground Railroad while a medical student at Cincinnati.—W. H. Siebert, *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom* (N. Y.—1898), 104. S. P. Chase later wrote that Townshend was converted to abolitionism by Chase's argument in the Mathilda Case.—R. B. Warden, *Private Life and Public Services of Salmon Portland Chase* (Cincinnati—1874), 282–283.

New York, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin and Iowa. Its birthplace was certainly no more truly Ripon, Wisconsin, or Jackson, Michigan, than Utica or Rochester, or Oberlin. It is surprising how literal-minded and subservient to mere technical chronology some historians have been!

Long before the Kansas-Nebraska Bill was passed the Western Reserve had been warned by Edward Wade and others that it was part of an "atrocious plot" to exclude free men from Kansas. One of the very first meetings held in the North to protest "against this nefarious scheme" took place in Oberlin on January 28, 1854. The final passage of the measure by the Senate by a one-sided vote shocked and shamed the Oberlinites. "The progress of political corruption and of pro-slavery power since 1820 has been fearful," remarked the *Oberlin Evangelist.* "Unless arrested now, we shall have nothing to expect but universal slavery—its admission as a national institution."[10] On July 1, 1854, a meeting of citizens of Lorain County was held at Oberlin and declared against any future bargains with slavery or any yielding to the South. The so-called "Oberlin Anti-Slavery Platform" was drawn up on August 3. "Either slavery must prevail throughout the land, or it must be entirely abolished." "The time has come when the people of the North should rally and combine their energies, not only to prevent the spread of slavery, but to crush the system itself." Oberlin voters declared it to be their purpose to bring slavery "to an end where it is, as well as to oppose its extension over territory where it is not." All past or future compromises were renounced.[11] Unlike the majority of Republicans, Oberlinites were not afraid to recognize the obvious implications of the "House Divided Against Itself."

Oberlin gave its full support to such Republican leaders as Philemon Bliss, the Elyria lawyer who had studied at the Oneida Institute; Dr. N. S. Townshend, Oberlin trustee; J. H. Giddings, always a friend of Oberlin and Oberlin notions; Benjamin Wade and his brother, "Professor" Edward Wade; Congressman Harrison Gray Otis Blake of Medina, and James Monroe.[12]

[10]*Forest City Democrat* (Cleveland), Jan. 25, 1854, quoted in the *Annals of Cleveland;* and *Oberlin Evangelist,* Feb. 15 and Mar. 15, 1854.

[11]*Oberlin Evangelist,* July 6, Aug. 16, 1854.

[12]On Bliss see Hamilton College, *Complete Alumni Register* (1922, 36. There are sketches of Bliss, Giddings and Benjamin Wade in the D. A. B., and of all seven in the *Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774–1927* (Washington—1928).

James Monroe, a graduate of the College in 1846 and of the Theological Department in 1849, Professor of Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres from 1849 to 1862, was Oberlin's chief contribution to the new party. He was a native of Connecticut who, after several years of country school teaching, was persuaded by Garrison to become an anti-slavery lecturer. After a few highly successful years speaking in behalf of the slave in Connecticut and neighboring states he concluded that he needed more education. He had intended at first to go to the Oneida Institute, but when informed by Beriah Green that the school was about to be suspended he turned, naturally, to Oberlin. When he came West in 1844 he brought with him a letter of introduction from Samuel J. May to Professor Amasa Walker describing him as "an ardent & effectual laborer in the Anti-Slavery cause."[13] At Oberlin he was converted from his Garrisonian predilections and enhanced his reputation for "pure, beautiful & powerful eloquence" in addresses on slavery delivered at the regular exercises and on special occasions throughout northern Ohio.[14] Twice he refused nominations from the Free Soilers but, in 1855, accepted the Republican nomination for assemblyman and was elected. He continued to represent Lorain County in the Assembly until 1860, and was a state senator from 1860 to 1862. He gained a reputation for "manly honesty and truthfulness" as well as oratorical ability, even among his political opponents. His outstanding achievement was the passage of the Habeas Corpus Act in 1856, an act whose purpose was to counteract the effect of the Federal Fugitive Slave Law.[15]

Oberlin delivered its moral influence and its votes almost unanimously to the Republican Party. In 1856 the *Evangelist* ran up the banner of Oberlin Republicanism which was not to be lowered for over half a century. "By all that is fearful in the pending crisis—by all that is sacred in freedom and right—we urge our fellow citizens to ensure the election of the men whose

[13]Green to Monroe, Mar. 2, 1843, and May to Walker, Mar. 13, 1844 (Monroe MSS).

[14]John Morgan to Gerrit Smith, Mar. 2, 1846, and James Monroe to G. S., Mar. 20, 1846 (Gerrit Smith MSS). Smith gave $15.00 to Monroe on the recommendation of Morgan. See also Morgan's flattering description of Monroe in the letter to Mark Hopkins, Dec. 15, 1847 (Morgan-Hopkins MSS): "Monroe's character is as pure and noble as his talents are extraordinary."

[15]Ellsworth has a very good review of his career (*Op. Cit.*, 116–131). See Monroe's own account in his *Oberlin Thursday Lectures* (Oberlin—1897), 95–157.

JAMES MONROE
IN THE FORTIES

(From a daguerreotype in the possession of his daughter, Emma Monroe Fitch)

JAMES MONROE
IN THE LATE FIFTIES

(From a photograph in the 1859 Class Album in the Oberlin College Library)

banner flings to the breeze the freeman's emphatic sign—*Free Press, Free Speech, Free Men, Fremont and Victory!*"[16] Professors Monroe and Peck spoke for Fremont at many meetings in northern Ohio. A straw vote taken at random in a group of alumni at Commencement showed 204 for Fremont, two for Fillmore and one for Buchanan! The actual election figures show overwhelming Republican majorities in Russia Township in all elections from 1856 on. In 1857 a member of the faculty was ready to assert at a Thursday Lecture that "a person committed fully to the Democratic party could not be a Christian."[17] Of course, the Oberlin influence on voters was not limited to Russia Township, or any other geographical unit. It was felt wherever the *Evangelist* was read, wherever former Oberlin students taught or preached. It was most concentrated, however, on the Western Reserve and fully appreciated by friend and foe. In the spring of 1859 the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* declared: "A man can no more go to Congress from this Reserve without Oberlin, than he can go to heaven in a sling. . . ."[18]

Another method of attacking the slave system was by emigrating or encouraging emigration to Kansas. In August the men of Oberlin led in the organization of an emigrant aid society, the purpose of which was to encourage free-soil settlers to go to Kansas and, by their votes and moral influence, save it from slavery.[19]

The Kansas Emigrant Aid Association of Northern Ohio was organized at Oberlin on August 21, 1854. Professor Fairchild was made president and John A. Reed of Oberlin and Treasurer Hamilton Hill, secretaries. There were eight vice-presidents, among them Philemon Bliss, Ralph Plumb—later an Oberlin resident, Francis D. Parish—the Sandusky abolitionist, and Judge Joseph R. Swan of Columbus. Swan was also a New York Yankee—born at Western, Oneida County, a place much involved in the Oberlin background. Swan was an abolitionist and critic of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, soon after elected Chief Justice of the Ohio Supreme Court by his Republican supporters. There were twelve members of the executive committee of whom ten were

[16]Aug. 27, 1856.

[17]*Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Sept. 3, 1856, quoted in Ellsworth, *Op. Cit.*, 132, and Sprague Upton, MS Diary, Oct. 15, 1857 (lent by Prof. W. T. Upton).

[18]Apr. 20, 1859, quoted by Ellsworth, *Op. Cit.*, 134 n.

[19]Ellsworth has made a thorough review of the participation of Oberlin in this society (*Op. Cit.*, 136–164).

Oberlin residents or directly associated with the College. All seem to have been of one opinion—that the Kansas test of strength was crucial. "Let Slavery triumph now, and the fate of this nation may be sealed; but let the fair land of Kansas be rescued from the threatened dominion of Slavery, and it will plume afresh the drooping wing of Freedom, and inspire a rational hope, that, having vanquished the slave power *once,* the North will be filled with a life that shall work out the complete redemption of our government, and the enfranchisement of the oppressed millions of our land." Plans were immediately made to take practical action. It was decided that not only should the association aid "emigrants in getting to Kansas, by way of providing for their transportation at reduced rates, and their reception, comfort and location upon their arrival" but assistance should be given in the erection of schoolhouses and supplying of teachers. The members of companies so aided must be "anti-slavery men, temperance men, and otherwise men of good moral character." A committee was selected to arrange for special railroad rates and an advance agent was sent to the Territory to prepare the way for the first company.[20] Information and advice was sought from Eli Thayer's well-known New England Emigrant Aid Society. Two explorers were sent out to Kansas to find the best sites for settlement; one of them was the active anti-slavery worker, Samuel Plumb, of Lenox, Ashtabula County.

In all, this association sent out from Ohio to Kansas at least seven different companies of settlers, numbering from twenty to over a hundred individuals each. The first company left Oberlin in October, 1854.

"On Monday of this week [wrote the secretary to the *Cleveland Leader*] a company of forty-three, under the auspices of our Association, started for Kansas . . . The men composing the company were just such as are now needed in that country, rugged, hard workers, who know how a living is earned *here,* and hence, will bravely meet the hardships which at first must necessarily be encountered.

"The prayers and earnest good wishes of thousands who are left behind, follow this noble band of freemen."[21]

[20]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Aug. 30 and Sept. 27, 1854. —On Swan see the sketch in the *Dictionary of American Biography.*

[21]*Cleveland Leader,* Sept. 7, 30, Nov. 3, 1854, quoted in the *Annals of Cleveland.*

Though they started out with high hopes the party broke up immediately upon arrival at Kansas City and many returned home without even entering Kansas. Those who stayed suffered severely from poverty and the intense cold of a winter west of the Missouri.

Only small groups went out in 1855, but early in 1856 the largest of all the bands was assembled. The company was recruited and led by Samuel N. Wood of Oberlin and Mt. Gilead, Ohio. He spoke in various towns throughout the Western Reserve, pleading for money *and firearms!* This company seems to have been well supplied with "Beecher's Bibles" and "psalm books," in which it was impossible "to read more than six psalms . . . without turning over a new leaf!" As early as the middle of February Oberlin had contributed "two hundred and five dollars and three rifles" besides several emigrants![22]

Excitement was at a fever pitch in Oberlin in 1856 as a result of the "Sack of Lawrence." A pro-slavery sheriff attempted to arrest Samuel Wood at Lawrence, the anti-slavery headquarters. Wood was rescued by his Northern friends, so the sheriff came again with a large armed force, burned down the hotel and wrecked the press of the Free-Soil paper. Wood escaped and in the fall was back in Ohio raising another company of emigrants. Several Oberlin men were involved in the "Kansas War" which followed, some of them agents of the American Missionary Association. In October Josiah G. Fuller, a graduate of the Theological Department in the Class of 1854, was one of a group of northern men arrested by pro-slavery officers on the charge of murder.[23]

On May 27, the day after news had been received of the trouble at Lawrence, an indignation meeting in the Chapel crowded it to its utmost capacity. Denunciatory resolutions were drawn up. Professor James Monroe said that the "audacity and atrocity" of the slave power had reached such a height that words failed him. Professor Hudson declared that "the spirit of true democracy had utterly perished from the self-styled democratic party; that instead of sustaining a government *by* the people, and *for* the people, they had surrendered themselves, bound hand and

[22]The above paragraph is based on Ellsworth, *Op. Cit.,* 145–146, 152–158. The quotation is Ellsworth's from the *New York Tribune,* Apr. 16, 1856.

[23]*Cleveland Leader,* May 1, 2, 5, and Oct. 12, 15, 1856, as cited in the *Annals of Cleveland.* There are many items in the *Annals* on the Kansas excitement.

foot, to the sway of a petty oligarchy—a few thousand slaveholders."[24] In the middle of June, President Finney's son returned from the front and described his experiences to a sympathetic crowd in the chapel. Professor Cowles' son and other Oberlinites wrote letters every few weeks, giving their story of the latest developments.[25] The students were profoundly stirred. The senior class sent a petition to the faculty, asking "permission to graduate before vacation, in order to emigrate immediately." "Members of other classes will no doubt leave more or less," a young lady student confided to her diary, "but the Seniors en masse . . . God go with them."[26] Another company left Oberlin early in July. How many students it contained is not known, but all of the senior men were present to deliver their oratorical attacks upon slavery and other evils at Commencement in August! In March of 1856 the Young Ladies' Literary Society considered the question: "Resolved that under existing circumstances Ladies ought to emigrate to Kansas." In October one of the men's societies debated for an evening whether, "in case Buchanan should be elected the next president of the U. S., the Free States should immediately take measures to protect their citizens in Kansas, even though they should come in conflict with the general government."[27]

Of course, only a few hundred settlers were actually transported to Kansas under the supervision of the Kansas Emigration Aid Association of Northern Ohio, and some of them would have gone anyway. The indirect effects of its propaganda are not measurable.

An important result of the Kansas emigrant movement to Oberlin was that it brought the New York Yankees, Samuel and Ralph Plumb into the picture. Back in 1836 Samuel Plumb was secretary of the anti-slavery society at Vernon in Trumbull County, Ohio. By 1840 the Plumb brothers had moved to Lenox in Ashtabula County and were leaders of the Liberty Party in the eastern part of the Western Reserve. Samuel Plumb was, in the early fifties, a member of the state legislature, and Henry

[24] *Oberlin Evangelist,* June 4, 1856, and Mary L. Cowles, MS Diary, May 26, 27, 1856.

[25] Letters in Cowles-Little MSS.

[26] Mary Cowles, MS Diary, June 19, 1856.

[27] Y.L.L.S., MS Minutes, Mar. 6, 1856, and Young Men's Lyceum, MS Minutes, Oct. 21, 1856.

Cowles was with him on the steps of the old Capitol when he was knocked down by a political opponent. He showed his radical leanings when, in 1853, he headed a committee which reported favorably on a memorial from a peace society. We have noted his activities as explorer for the Kansas aid society. Ralph Plumb went to the state legislature in 1855, studied law, and began practice in Oberlin in 1857. By 1858 both were established in Oberlin as leading citizens, wholly sympathetic to the Oberlin outlook.[28]

Oberlin and Oberlinites were always ready to give aid to those Negroes who took their fate in their own hands. From the middle thirties to the Civil War, fugitives were constantly passing through Oberlin on the "Underground Railway." One of the first recorded instances was in 1837. Saturday evening, April 28, the community was thrown into a turmoil by the news that a former student, Martin L. Brooks, had brought in four fugitive slaves in a wagon on their way to Canada. A student wrote home to her brother some two weeks later:

"They took supper in the dining hall, and then went into the sitting room where crowds of students flocked around them to see, and converse with them. About half past seven or eight o'clock they went to the tavern, where they remained till Monday night, and were then taken to Hudson by a couple of students—[William] Sheffield and [Sherlock] Bristol. When they started a report was in circulation, that their Masters were after them, and were only a few miles from Oberlin. They accordingly went prepared for an attack from their Masters. About two hours after they started, five other Young Men [armed with "dirks, butcher-knives, pistols, etc.," says Delazon Smith], went out after them on horse back to see that no harm befell them on the road. Happily their fears proved groundless, they were permitted to proceed unmolested."[29]

Oberlin was already prepared to appeal to the "higher law"

[28]Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, *Report of the First Anniversary, 1836; Philanthropist,* Aug. 11, 1840; *Oberlin Evangelist,* Feb. 2, Mar. 16, 1853, and *Biog. Directory of the American Congress.* In January, 1859, Samuel Plumb was secretary of the Oberlin Bible Society.—Oberlin Bible Society, MS Minutes, Jan. 18, 1859.

[29]Nancy Prudden to George Prudden, May 16, 1837 (Prudden MSS). The account is substantially the same as that given by David L. Parker in a letter to a member of the Ohio Legislature written in February of 1840 (*Senate Journal,* Mar. 10, 1840, cited in Ellsworth, 166) and by Delazon Smith in his *History of Oberlin.*

against the legal rights of the masters and the legislation of state and nation. The masters had the law on their side. There had been a Federal fugitive slave law since 1793. In 1839 the Ohio legislature by a large vote had passed a statute which practically extended the jurisdiction of Kentucky, so far as fugitive slave cases were concerned, over the state of Ohio. Professor Finney introduced a resolution at the 1839 meeting of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society declaring that this act was not "obligatory upon the citizens of this State, inasmuch as its requisitions are a palpable violation of the Constitution of this State, and of the United States, of the common law and of the law of God."[30] In the autumn of that very year Professor Thome of Oberlin felt it necessary to discontinue his classes and go into hiding temporarily because of the part which he had played in procuring the escape of "an aged colored woman [of Kentucky who] was about to be sold into Southern slavery!"[31]

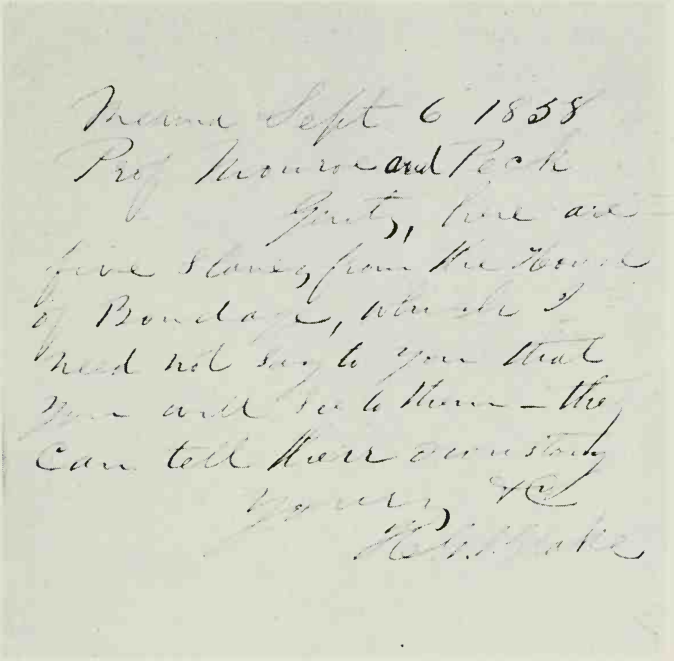
In 1841 came the first attempt to recapture a refugee in Oberlin. Three "kidnappers" arrived in town in February of that year. With the support of a constable from Pittsfield, they entered the house of one Leonard Page and, finding a Negro man in a closet and a woman under a bed, seized them and started with them back toward Pittsfield. It was evening, and citizens and students were attending a meeting in the Colonial Hall. As soon as the news of the capture was received the meeting adjourned and part of the men set out after the "slave-catchers." By superior numbers (and probably the display of weapons) the Southerners were overawed and forced to repair with the alleged fugitives to Elyria, where their claims could be examined in open court. While the wheels of justice were getting in motion the Negroes escaped from the Elyria jail and, stopping for a few minutes in Oberlin for supplies and advice, pushed on to Canada.[32]

No one will ever know how many fugitives went north by way of Oberlin. One thing, however, is certain: all who came were

[30]*Report,* 17.

[31]J. A. Thome to Gerrit Smith, Oct. 4, 1839 (Gerrit Smith MSS), and James Fairchild to Mary Kellogg, Aug. 24, 1839 (Fairchild MSS).

[32]*Philanthropist,* Mar. 24, 31, 1841, and *Liberator,* May 21, 1841, quoted in A. B. Hart, *American History Told by Contemporaries,* III, 630–633; *Oberlin Evangelist,* Mar. 3, 1841. Ellsworth (*Op. Cit.,* 176–187) cites other accounts, especially the *Norwalk Experiment,* Mar. 24, 1841. There is an interesting description of the affair in a letter from James H. Fairchild to Mary Kellogg in the Fairchild MSS.



A TICKET ON THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

"Medina Sept 6 1858
Prof. Monroe and Peck
Gents, here are five Slaves from the House of Bondage, which I need not say to you that you will see to them—they can tell their own Story

Yours etc
H. G. Blake"

(From the Monroe MSS)

"'THE CONFIDENCE GAME"—THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD NEAR OBERLIN

A drawing by Professor Churchill (the title is also his) showing students decoying "man stealers" into the woods at the right while fugitive slaves escape to the left.

(Oberlin College Library)

hospitably received and cared for, and none was ever forcibly returned from Oberlin to the "House of Bondage." Townsmen, students, college faculty and officials were involved in the conspiracy. On one occasion a Negro man, dressed like a woman and with his hands and face whitened, was escorted to the lake by a college student. The students quite plainly looked upon the arrival of a band of Negroes as an opportunity for a lark. Repeatedly the fugitives were housed in the homes of members of the faculty. For those who chose to remain in Oberlin, schools were provided. They were cared for in illness and, if they died, given a decent burial at public expense in the village cemetery. The schools were taught by college students and, on at least one occasion, funds of the Institute were diverted for their support. The Female Anti-Slavery Society and the Maternal Association took a special interest in caring for the female fugitives. For a time, at least, the Prudential Committee of the College maintained a regular "Fund for Fugitives."[33]

The propaganda value of all events associated with the "Underground" was fully appreciated. When a Negro woman died in Oberlin in 1841 a notice was published in the *Evangelist:*

"Died,—At Oberlin, on Thursday morning, September 16, CHARLOTTE TEMPLE. The deceased was formerly a slave in Virginia. She has been in this place most of the time for the last two years, during which she has maintained a uniform, upright Christian character. . . .

"She was ignorant of her own age, but her hoary head and furrowed cheeks showed that her years had not been few. The numerous scars upon her body told of the extent of inhuman barbarity inflicted upon her. The slavery from which she fled still retains in its grasp all her relatives. Children and grandchildren survive her. But they were not present to smooth her dying pillow nor follow her to the grave. The mother died alone, and was buried by strangers, without one from among her numerous offspring to follow her to the tomb; for they are all shut up in the prison house of slavery."[34]

[33]P. C. M., Nov. 2, 1844, and Dec. 4, 1862; Maternal Association, MS Minutes, Apr. 2, 1845, and "Report of Female Anti-Slavery Society" in *Oberlin Evangelist,* Aug. 15, 1855. For Negroes' accounts of experiences in coming through Oberlin on the U. G. R. R. see *Narratives of the Sufferings of Lewis and Milton Clarke.* (Boston—1846), 46, 84–87.

[34]Sept. 29, 1841.

When, thirteen years later, a four-year-old mulatto fugitive died in Oberlin, over a thousand persons attended the funeral. "The bloodhounds," runs the twenty-first annual report of the Oberlin Maternal Association, "urged by their more ferocious masters, pursued the mother with her fainting burden, till the child, like a hunted deer, fell sick. When it reached us it was so near heaven as to be no longer valued by pence and dollars. It was left with us to die while its adopted mother fled beyond the bounds of danger. A monument furnished by the friends of the fatherless heads the little mound, bearing the inscription, 'The Stranger's Grave.' By this grave we tell our children of the sorrows of the little slave. In the shadow of this monument our Sabbath school children with thankful hearts and tearful eyes sing—

I was not born a little slave
To labor in the sun;
To wish I were but in my grave,
And all my labors done.

"Long may we from this silent spot go to our closet and pray for the slave-mother with her countless sorrows, and for her motherless children with all their unmitigated miseries, and by this stranger's grave may we *vow eternal enmity* to a system which blots the moral sun from heirs to immortality, and which at their birth consigns the son to become a beast of burden, and the daughter to a life of prostitution."[35] The headstone was paid for by the dimes of Sabbath School children.

Of course, not all of the Oberlinites working for the fugitives were in Oberlin. Wherever a former Oberlin student might live there was likely to be a station on the Underground Railroad. On the Welland Canal in Canada, Hiram Wilson waited to receive the escaping Negroes, find them a job and a place to live, aid them in securing a rudimentary education, and look after the needs of their souls.[36]

Three Oberlin students even crossed over the border into Dixie to entice and guide slaves to freedom. George Thompson attempted to help two slaves to escape across the Mississippi from Missouri into Illinois. He was captured, found guilty of

[35]Oberlin Maternal Association, MS Minutes, 1854, and also in the *Oberlin Evangelist*, Mar. 15, 1854.

[36]See above, pages 246–248, and Siebert, *Op. Cit.*, 205–207.

"grand larceny," and suffered in a Missouri penitentiary for nearly five years, beguiling the time by conducting revivals and prayer meetings, composing poems, reading "Mahan on Perfectionism," and writing pious letters to the *Oberlin Evangelist*.[37] Calvin Fairbank ventured repeatedly into Virginia and Kentucky and even as far as Arkansas to escort Negroes out to liberty. Perhaps he was the most daring operator on the whole Underground Railroad. In 1844 he was associated with Delia A. Webster, also a former Oberlin student then teaching in the academy at Lexington, Kentucky, in planning and attempting to execute an escape. They were both seized and convicted on the evidence of a letter which Fairbank had addressed to friends in Oberlin, but had not mailed. Miss Webster was soon pardoned, but Fairbank served a prison sentence of more than four years. Less than three years after being freed he was caught again and served twelve more years! In the few years when he was free he claimed to have liberated forty-seven slaves. Most Oberlin people did not approve of such aggressive tactics, but when he visited the town and College again after his pardon in 1864 he was received as something of a hero.[38]

From the passage of the Federal Fugitive Slave Act in 1850 Oberlin was in a practical state of rebellion against the national government. This law provided for the use of Federal marshals and Federal commissions to secure the return of fugitives from the Northern states, required Northern citizens to aid in their recapture, and prescribed fines and imprisonment for those who interfered with the execution of the law. Oberlinites refused to recognize the act as constitutional and binding. In an address before the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society in New York in May, 1851, Finney insisted on calling the measure, "the Fugitive Slave Bill"—"for he could not call it a *law*, for he did not believe it was a law." "The fugitive law must be repealed, or it will repeal the Constitution," declared the *Oberlin Evangelist*. "Enforced it cannot be—without such excitements and agita-

[37]George Thompson, *Prison Life and Reflections* (Oberlin 1847), and *The Prison Bard* (Hartford—1848). On his later career as a missionary see above, pages 259–260.

[38]Calvin Fairbank, *During Slavery Times* (Chicago—1890); Delia A. Webster, *Kentucky Jurisprudence, A History of the Trial of Miss Delia A. Webster,* etc. (Vergennes, Vt.—1845); *Oberlin Evangelist,* Dec. 3, 1845. A letter from Hamilton Hill to J. A. Howland, Feb. 22, 1856 (Treas. Off., File W), is unfavorable to Miss Webster. There is a sketch of Fairbank in the *D. A. B.*

tions as shall shake the continent, and make the bonds of our Union as flax amid the flames."[39]

Some of the subjects discussed by the literary societies show how much Oberlin was thinking about the "higher law" and nullification as applied to this act. In September of 1850 one of the ladies' societies considered the question: "Ought christians to obey the new Fugitive law?" In April of the following spring one of the men's societies, after an hour and a half debate, voted in the negative on the question: "Ought a functionary of the government either to execute a law which in his opinion conflicts with the divine law or else resign his office?" Two years later the same society was debating: "Ought we to resist by violence the execution of the Fugitive Slave law?" The rival organization discussed the same issue in different forms: in 1854, "Resolved that the people of Massachusetts would have been justified in resisting the forces of the United States and detaining the Slave Burns in freedom by violence?", and in 1856, "Does the injustice of a law free the citizens of the U.S. from the moral obligation to obey it?"[40] But would Oberlinites act on their principles if the opportunity presented itself? The test came in 1858.

[39]American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, *Report, 1851,* pages 16–18, and *Oberlin Evangelist,* Oct. 23, 1850.

[40]Young Ladies' Literary Society, MS Minutes, Sept. 28, 1850; Union Society, Apr. 23, 1851, and Mar. 23, 1853, and Young Men's Lyceum, June 6, 1854, and Oct. 28, 1856.

# CHAPTER XXVI

# *HIGHER LAW*

"The individual must still use his own intellect and his own moral faculty, to decide for himself the path of his duty. He may owe to a court the most respectful consideration and pondering of its decision; but when to his mind, after careful, candid examination, God appears to decide against the court, he must act accordingly and submit peacefully to the penalty, if he cannot honorably evade it."

JOHN KEEP in the *Oberlin Evangelist,* April 14, 1852.

"Oberlin is the nursery of just such men as John Brown and his followers. With arithmetic is taught the computation of number of slaves and their value per head; with geography, territorial lines and those localities of slave territory supposed to be favorable to emancipation; with history, the chronicles of the peculiar institution; and with ethics and philosophy, the higher law, and resistance to Federal enactments. Hence the graduates of Oberlin are Masters of Art in abolitionism, and with the acquirement of their degrees, are prepared to go a degree or two further, if occasion requires. Here is where the younger Browns obtain their conscientiousness in ultraisms, taught from their cradle up, so that while they rob slaveholders of their property, or commit murder for the cause of freedom, they imagine that they are doing God service."

*The Pennsylvanian* (Philadelphia), quoted in the *Oberlin Evangelist,* December 7, 1859.

FUGITIVE slaves were regularly cared for in Oberlin out of Russia Township funds. The township records contain repeated entries of appropriations for "poor stranger" or "transient paupers." In March of 1856 the township trustees voted $10.50 "to pay J. M. Fitch for boarding a poor stranger" at James Armstrong's. Fitch was a former printer, proprietor of a book-store, superintendent of the Sunday School, and a local

agent on the Underground. Later, money was provided from the same source to pay Armstrong for "Keeping Lott family," to pay $41.00 to Dr. "A. Steele for [medical] services to Tr[ansient] poor," and to recompense Mayor A. N. Beecher for expenditures in behalf of the "Wilford family—Transient Poor."[1]

In 1856 Anson P. Dayton was Town Clerk in charge of these accounts and also acting School Manager for the township. In 1857 his place in both capacities was taken by John M. Langston, Mulatto Oberlin College graduate and practicing attorney.[2] Simeon Bushnell, assistant in Fitch's store, succeeded Langston as Clerk in 1859. Dayton had originally come to Oberlin as a mason but took up the practice of law, and in 1858 became a United States deputy marshal, in which capacity it was his duty to enforce the Federal Fugitive Slave Law![3] He certainly was well-informed about the workings of the Underground in Oberlin. He may also have been jealous of his colored successor.

Sometime in the early spring of 1858 a full-blood Negro called John, or John Price, turned up in Oberlin. On March 29 Langston, the colored Clerk, recorded in the township records that, "Trustees made arrangement with George Logan to Keep John Price & Josephine Chaffin, Paupers, for 2 weeks from 27th March 1858, at $3.00 per week. Logan to board & Keep said Paupers." John was later moved to Armstrong's, where so many other "paupers" had been cared for, and further appropriations were made to cover his board at $1.25 a week throughout the summer to September 10.

Oberlin was one of the most notorious refuges of fugitive slaves in the North; it was to be expected that masters and Federal agents would look there for their lost property. The appointment of Dayton as deputy marshal presaged some sort of drastic government action. Apparently he was involved in an attempted seizure of alleged escaped slaves on Monday night of Commencement week, 1858. President Hitchcock of Western Reserve College was the guest speaker, and he had just completed his address when the fire-bell was rung to call townsmen, students, and visitors to rescue the threatened Negroes. The supposed fugitives were saved from an apparently wholly illegal abduction.

[1]Russia Township Trustees, MS Records, 1855–69.
[2]Russia Township Board of Education, MS Records, 1842–71.
[3]On Dayton see *Lorain County News* (Oberlin), Mar. 14, 1860.

Late in August, Anderson Jennings of Maysville, Kentucky, arrived in town and put up at the somewhat notorious tavern kept by Chauncey Wack on the east side of South Main Street, an establishment sometimes known as the Russia House or Railroad House. The fact could not long be concealed that Jennings had gotten in touch with Dayton and the two were looking over the village for "likely niggers."[4]

Dayton certainly knew all about John Price who had been "on the town" now for several months. Jennings promptly "recognized" him as being the slave of a Kentucky neighbor by the name of Bacon. The latter was notified and sent an agent to recover his property. The agent and two deputy-marshals joined Jennings at Wack's the second week in September. It may be easily imagined that Oberlin people noted the presence of these four armed strangers and were very much on the alert. Oberlin's record as a safe haven for fugitives must not be spoiled.

The "slave-catchers" must have seen the scowls on the faces of the local citizens; they decided it would be prudent to try strategy. So Jennings bribed a rather elfish twelve-year-old farm boy by the name of Shakespeare Boynton to help them. (This youngster later testified in open court: "*Expect* I am a son of [Lewis Boynton], but it's hard telling now-a-days!") Following Jennings' instructions, Shakespeare persuaded John Price to ride out with him into the country to get another Negro to dig potatoes for the Boyntons. When the two were a mile or so east of town they were overtaken by a carriage containing three of the slavecatchers. This was the first in a rapid series of crises in the life of John, but he seems to have taken it calmly. Shakespeare later testified that the Negro was picking his teeth with his jack-knife when his pursuers appeared. They made him surrender his "toothpick" and hustled him into their wagon; the Boynton boy turned his horse toward Oberlin. At Wack's tavern he collected his reward of twenty dollars from Anderson Jennings.

Meantime the slavecatchers with their prisoner drove down the diagonal road from East Oberlin to Wellington. There they

[4]The most important source on the rescue is Jacob R. Shipherd, *History of the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue* (Boston—1859). Very useful also are the accounts in William C. Cochran, *The Western Reserve and the Fugitive Slave Law,* Western Reserve Historical Society, *Collections* No. 101 (Cleveland—1920), 118–211; *Oberlin Evangelist,* Sept. 29, 1858, and James H. Fairchild, *The Underground Railroad,* Western Reserve Historical Society, *Tract No. 87* (Cleveland—1895) IV, 113–114.

were joined by Jennings at the Wadsworth House where they stayed while waiting for the southbound train on the "Big Four."

But Oberlin was warned. Seth Bartholomew of Oberlin was visiting Pittsfield to put up posters advertising a Great Panorama, and saw John and his captors headed south and in a hurry. Ansel Lyman, an Oberlin preparatory student, hitch-hiked back from Pittsfield with Bartholomew and heard all about what the showman had seen. Lyman seems to have passed the news around among the students; Bartholomew found J. M. Fitch, Professor Henry Peck and Attorney Ralph Plumb together on the street and told them.

The community and student body had been much aroused by previous efforts to carry off Negroes and were determined that this attempt should not succeed either. There was a spontaneous outpouring down the Wellington road: students, townsmen, youngsters, leading citizens, perhaps faculty members; some on foot, some on horseback, some piled into nondescript wagons. A few were carrying shotguns and pistols, of which a part were probably loaded. Simeon Bushnell, Fitch's clerk, drove fast horses on a light buckboard. Two college seniors, James L. Patton and W. D. Scrimgeour, and a senior theolog, John G. W. Cowles—son of Professor Henry Cowles, went together. Chauncey Wack went, too, with two livery-stable-keepers; he wanted to get another ten-dollar bill for a suspected counterfeit Jennings had paid him. Ansel Lyman recruited two student cronies: William E. Lincoln and Richard Winsor, both Englishmen.

Within a few hours a large crowd had gathered in Wellington, a crowd which was augmented by neighboring farmers who had come to help put out a fire. The Negro was held by his captors in a room on the second floor of the hotel, besieged by the would-be rescuers from the street and by way of the halls and stairways. There were confused and inconclusive parleys about legal papers; some in the crowd threatened to tear down the building. There was ribald shouting and cursing—the participants were not all "saints" of Oberlin. Somebody in the hall stuck his fist through a stovepipe hole and punched Anderson Jennings in the head! Then the students Lyman, Winsor and Lincoln climbed a ladder and broke in the window. Winsor seized John Price;[5] the

[5]Winsor was the personal rescuer of the Negro according to a MS history of the Class of 1867 and the Oberlin College, *Semi-Centennial Register,* 118.

door was pushed open, and he was passed over the heads of the crowd down the stairs and out into the street where he was thrown heels-up into Bushnell's buckboard. There was much hurrahing and Bushnell drove off in a cloud of dust toward Oberlin.

It was evening when J. M. Fitch and Professor James Monroe brought John Price to the home of James Harris Fairchild, Professor of Moral and Mental Philosophy and later President of Oberlin College. After spending three days and nights in a back chamber at the Fairchilds', John went on to Canada and was never heard from again.[6]

Oberlin seemed to have defied and flouted the Federal authority. Here was a chance for the Government to make an example for the enlightenment of other stations on the "Underground Railroad." On December 7, 1858, Federal marshals appeared in Oberlin and served papers upon fifteen Oberlin residents, ordering them to appear before the United States District Court at Cleveland to answer to charges of infringement of the Fugitive Slave Law. Five other Oberlinites, also indicted, appeared voluntarily along with the fifteen, to plead not guilty. These included Henry E. Peck, Associate Professor of Intellectual and Moral Philosophy, James M. Fitch, and Ralph Plumb, attorney. W. E. Lincoln was teaching school down in the central part of the state. He was arrested in his schoolroom, manacled and taken to Cleveland, where, however, he was released, as were the other accused, without bail. Besides the twenty-one from Oberlin, sixteen from Wellington were presented. The cases against the latter were not pressed and the trial thus concentrated exclusively on the Oberlinites.[7]

Oberlin and its Republican friends welcomed the test. A great change had taken place in public opinion in northern Ohio since the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law. Oberlin found itself actually popular among the majority of its neighbors on the Reserve! Prominent Republican lawyers from Cleveland and Elyria volunteered to defend the accused without charge. On January 11, 1859, twenty-six of the "Rescuers" and a larger number of their friends and sympathizers from Oberlin and else-

[6]A. T. Swing, *James Harris Fairchild* (New York—c. 1907), 190.

[7]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Dec. 22, 1858; *Oberlin Students' Monthly* (Feb.—1859), I, 161.

where held a banquet and organization meeting—the "Felon's Feast." A sumptuous dinner was provided. Music was furnished by the Oberlin String Band. "Stirring sentiments and speeches" were listened to for nearly five hours. Ralph Plumb responded to the toast: "The Alien and Sedition law of 1798 and the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850—alike arbitrary, undemocratic and unconstitutional." A committee of five members was selected for "defence and offence." A "Rescue Fund" was established; and Professor James Monroe, Oberlin's star salesman in the recent endowment drive, was sent out to collect subscriptions in neighboring towns. Oberlin bid defiance to the Democratic Party and the Federal Government.[8]

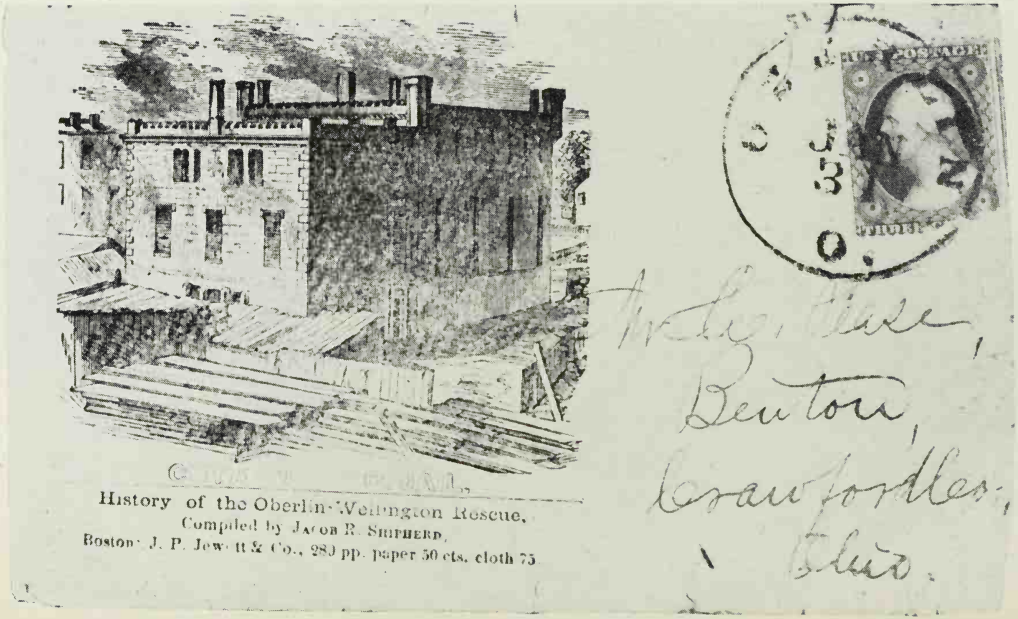
When the trial opened on April 5, it was evident that not only the men from Oberlin but Oberlin, itself, and the Republican Party were on trial. The Democrats had control of the court —even the jurors were all Democrats. Only one of the twelve was from the Western Reserve—Daniel P. Rhodes of Cleveland, father of James Ford Rhodes, the historian. The Republicans, however, turned out as counsel for the defense. Special reporters were present to cover the trial for the *New York Tribune*, the *Worcester Spy* and the *Pittsburgh Commercial Journal*, along with the representative of the Ohio press. The eyes of the nation, in the spring of 1859, were on the Cuyahoga County Courthouse.

There is not much use in pursuing justice at this late date, and the author gladly leaves the task for the legal historian. Justice, it can fairly be said, was aimed at by nobody at the time. The prosecution and the court sought to crucify Oberlin and the Republican Party and vindicate the Administration. The prisoners and the defense sought a martyrdom which would expose the essential tyranny of the Fugitive Slave Law and gain votes for the Republicans.

Simeon Bushnell, driver of the buckboard, was first to be tried. The witnesses on whom the prosecution chiefly depended were the Kentuckians, Seth Bartholomew—the showman, Chauncey Wack—the tavern keeper, the Democratic postmaster at Oberlin —E. F. Munson, a Democratic postmaster from Rochester (Ohio), two Oberlin livery-stable proprietors, and an unem-

[8]Cochran, *Op. Cit.*, 172; *Oberlin Students' Monthly*, I, 160 (Feb., 1859); and *Oberlin Evangelist*, Jan. 19, 1859. Monroe's subscription book is in the Monroe MSS. He raised over $200.00 in Wellington, Elyria and Medina.

HENRY EVERARD PECK
(From the 1859 Class Album in the Oberlin College Library)




OBERLIN STATIONERY AT THE TIME OF THE RESCUE CASE

ployed painter. Bartholomew testified that he heard Ralph Plumb, Peck and Fitch conspiring with Bushnell to rescue the Negro. Various leading Republican citizens of Oberlin (Photographer and former Mayor David Brokaw, Brewster Pelton, Dr. H. A. Bunce and Dr. Homer Johnson) swore that Bartholomew was an inveterate liar. The Democrats (Postmaster Munson, the livery-stable proprietors, Chauncey Wack, etc.) swore that his reputation for veracity was pure and unsullied. The court believed the Democrats.

The District Attorney ridiculed the "Saints of Oberlin" and condemned Higher Law as "Devil's Law." "Higher Law people ran into the predicament of free love and infidelity," he told the jury. "If St. Peck and St. Plumb 'go off' on this law, he would advise them to go where some good man preaches the Bible and not politics. Do you preach the Bible at Oberlin, or do you point out the spires of the churches as hell poles?" Albert Gallatin Riddle, counsel for the defense, eulogized the men of Oberlin who had stood at "the front, striking with us blow for blow for freedom." Jennings' papers were irregular, he insisted, and the seizure of John Price was, therefore, wholly illegal, so the men of Oberlin were entirely justified in interfering with what was essentially a kidnapping. (It was Riddle and not the District Attorney who was subsequently elected to Congress.)[9]

Bushnell was found guilty by the Democratic jury. Charles Langston, a Negro, brother of John M. Langston, was also convicted, and the two were sentenced by the Democratic judge, on May 11—Bushnell to 60 days and $600.00, Langston to 20 days and $100.00. The court then took a recess until July, the accused remaining in jail in the interim because of a technical disagreement with the judge over a point of honor.

During the recess application was made to the Ohio Supreme Court for a writ of *habeas corpus* to take Bushnell and Langston from the custody of the United States District Court on the ground that the Fugitive Slave Law, under which they had been convicted, was unconstitutional. There was some hope of success because the justices of the state court were all Republicans, Chief Justice Swan owing his office to the support of the free-soil Republicans. By a vote of three to two, however, the court upheld

[9]See the sketch of Riddle in the *D. A. B.* The account of the trial is based chiefly on Shipherd, *Op. Cit., passim.*

the constitutionality of the Fugitive Slave Law and denied that it had any power to interfere with a Federal court, anyway. Justice Swan, who had been an official of the Kansas Emigrant Aid Society of Northern Ohio, cast the deciding vote. The Republicans saw to it that he did not serve another term.[10]

It seems pretty clear that the Oberlin prisoners were quite glad to stay in jail, however, despite the fact that Professor Peck was thus kept from acting as moderator of the General Conference of Ohio Congregationalists! In jail they could most effectively exploit their martyrdom to the advantage of the cause of anti-slavery and the Republican Party. The jail was no palace, and lunatics were housed in the same building, but the sheriff and jailor were both friendly and did everything to make their guests as comfortable as possible under the circumstances. An Oberlin cobbler was allowed to have his last and established a shoe shop in "cell No. 3 upstairs, Cuyahoga County Jail, where he will be happy to meet his patrons." A saddler "opened a shop under the shed in the Jail Yard." Students procured books and recommenced study. On July 4 Fitch printed the one and only copy of the *Rescuer,* a periodical devoted to illustrating "the nature and claims of the Higher Law, the iniquities of American slavery, and the injustice and illegality of the Fugitive Slave Act."[11] Distinguished visitors were frequent. A Cleveland friend reported one day in April: "Father Giddings dined with the Prisoners yesterday under the kind protecting care of our good Anti-Slavery Sheriff."[12]

On April 17 Professor Peck was allowed to preach to a crowd in the jail-yard from a doorway of the jail-building. On another occasion the Oberlin Sabbath School was taken to Cleveland on the train. In Cleveland they paraded behind a brass band from the depot to the jail. Refreshments were served in the park nearby. They were received within the jail in class groups by J. M. Fitch, their "beloved superintendent."[13]

Never for a moment did the men of Oberlin waver in their denunciation of the fugitive law. On April 23, a week after his

[10]On Swan see above, page 391.

[11]*Rescuer,* Cuyahoga County Jail, July 4th, 1859, Vol. 1, No. 1. On the Ohio General Conference see the *Independent,* June 23, 1859.

[12]Henry R. Smith to Gerrit Smith, Apr. 19, 1859 (Gerrit Smith MSS).

[13]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Apr. 27, and July 13, 1859.

conviction, Simeon Bushnell wrote to Professor Monroe from the jail:

"They may do their worst, & when I am again out, I will rescue the first slave I get a chance to rescue . . . I have sworn eternal enmity to the *fugitive slave law,* & while God lets me live I mean to defy it, and trample upon it . . . I have never for one moment regretted the part I took in the Wellington rescue, and I hope none of you will, for we did *right*. We did our duty; at least so far as we went. Perhaps we did not go far enough. Had we given Jennings & his Associates a *coat of tar* before leaving Wellington perhaps they would not now be here. But enough, keep up good courage! The good Lord will yet bring all things out right. . . .

"P.S. Perhaps you had better burn this, dead dogs tell no tales, & burnt letters cannot be read."[14]

The Oberlinites out of jail stood resolutely behind those in jail. In May the "Faculty and Resident Trustees of Oberlin College" presented an address "to their Friends and Patrons throughout the Country" defending the Rescuers unequivocally. In the statement they proudly acknowledged Oberlin's activity as a station on the Underground Railroad, where fugitives were always welcome. As to John Price, they declared their belief that "it would have been inexcusable cowardice and wickedness in our people to have allowed this poor man to be kidnapped and dragged into bondage without an effort to save him." They denounced the Fugitive Slave Law as "not . . . of any binding force," and "utterly subversive of the fundamental principles of our government," and declared their intention to continue to treat it as null and void.[15]

Oberlin was in a grim state of mind in the spring of 1859. There were many who urged a resort to force. Some of the subjects discussed by the literary societies were ominous: "Res., That it would be wise to release Mr. Bushnell and his companions by force, provided they are not protected by our state courts," and "Resolved that it is the duty of citizens of Oberlin to forcibly resist the Fugitive Slave Law, henceforth and for-

[14]Bushnell to James Monroe, United States Judge's Room, Cleveland, Ohio, Apr. 23, 1859 (Monroe MSS).

[15]*Oberlin Evangelist,* May 25, 1859.

ever."[16] Of course, the leaders opposed the use of violence, but the students and the rank and file of townsmen were clearly restive. Threats of lynch law were heard in other parts of the Reserve. "The shortest, best and most practicable method of disposing of men thieves . . . ," a correspondent wrote to the *Portage County Democrat* in May, "is to set them dangling at the end of a rope four feet from the ground."[17]

The leaders of the Republican Party encouraged the agitation and made political capital out of it. On May 24 a mass meeting of "the foes of slavery and Despotism and the friends of State and Individual Rights" was held in the Public Square in Cleveland in front of the jail yard. It was estimated that six thousand were present, representing all parts of northern Ohio. Resolutions were adopted by acclamation denouncing the Fugitive Slave Law and expressing sympathy for the prisoners. It was also provided that a fund to be known as the Fund of Liberty be collected through the County Republican Committee. Some of the prisoners spoke from inside the jail yard. A fiery letter was read from Cassius M. Clay. Addresses were delivered by former President Mahan of Oberlin, the Hon. Joshua R. Giddings and Governor Salmon P. Chase.[18]

The prisoners and their friends were entirely conscious of the propaganda value of the situation. The *Rescuer* shows this plainly enough, as do their letters. J. M. Fitch wrote from the jail to Professor Monroe the last of April:

"We are cheerful & hopeful—yea more we are full of comfort. We are sure our enemies—the blasphemous enemies of God and humanity are finding that the farther they go the deeper they sink. We are animated to see that these oppressive, unfair, and inhuman proceedings are preaching to the state & the nation more effectually than a thousand of us could do if *our lives* should be devoted to the work. This is enough. May the God of the poor use us, and these stirring events to awaken a sleeping church and a sleeping State to a knowledge of the fact that the

[16]Phi Delta, MS Minutes, May 11, 1859, and Young Men's Lyceum, Apr. 19, 1859. "Our citizens are sometimes counselled to resort to their own strength for protection, and to take the law into their own hands."—Faculty-Trustee statement in *Oberlin Evangelist,* May 25, 1859.

[17]Quoted in Cochran, *Op. Cit.,* 179.

[18]*Ibid.,* 179–187, and *"Circular—to the Friends of Freedom—Cleveland, June 16, 1859.*

THE RESCUERS AT THE JAIL

Left to right: Jacob R. Shipherd (a student), Orindatus S. B. Wall (colored shoemaker), Loren Wadsworth, David Watson, W. Evans, E. Boyce, Ralph Plumb (attorney-at-law and Republican politician), Henry Evans, Simeon Bushnell (who carried Price to Oberlin from Wellington), J. Scott, Moses Gillett (Wellington), Charles Langston, A. W. Lyman (a student), J. Bartlett, W. E. Lincoln (a student), Richard Winsor (a student and the actual rescuer), J. Watson, J. M. Fitch (proprietor of the bookstore and superintendent of the Sunday School), Professor Henry E. Peck, and Daniel Williams.

(From an original photograph in the possession of Mrs. Brandt, Pittsfield, Ohio)

# OUT OF JAIL!

# THE RESCUERS

## Are coming TO-NIGHT!

**At a public Meeting at the Mayor's Office it was voted that the citizens, en masse, turn out** to meet them at the CARS, and escort them to the Church for Public Reception. The undersigned were appointed a Committee of Arrangements:

H. L. HENRY, A. N. BEECHER, W. P. HARRIS.
J. M. ELLIS, E. R. STILES.

**The committee appointed Father Keep for President of the Meeting at the church, and Prof. J. M. Ellis, Marshall. All the citizens are invited to meet the Rescuers at the Depot at half-past seven. The procession will form after the Band in the following order:**

The Mayor and Council; The Fire Department in Uniform; The Rescuers; The Citizens.

## Let there be a grand gathering!

**Oberlin, July 6.** **By order of Committee of Arrangements.**

BROADSIDE CALLING A MASS MEETING TO CELEBRATE THE RELEASE OF THE RESCUERS
(Original in the Oberlin College Library)

bolts of heaven are hanging over us, and the wrath of heaven is out against us because of our indifference to the Miseries of his suffering poor. If in his infinite mercy he shall condescend so to use us, then will the temporary inconvenience we suffer be unworthy of thought."[19] There is no doubt that the Rescue Case, like "Bleeding Kansas," was exceedingly fruitful of converts to the Republican Party and the anti-slavery cause.

The case was brought abruptly to a close when the four slave-catchers were indicted for kidnapping before the Common Pleas Court of Lorain County. If their trial had ever come off it is clear now, as it was to them then, that that court would have been as unanimously Republican as the court which tried Bushnell and Langston had been Democratic, and that conviction would have been certain. Jennings had spent many unprofitable months in Ohio already and he was, of course, anxious to avoid a jail sentence.[20] An exchange of prisoners was therefore effected and both indictments were dropped; the Kentuckians and the Oberlinites still awaiting trial went free.

On July 7, 1859, the prisoners left the jail and marched to the railroad station escorted by a guard of honor of Cleveland citizens. Hecker's Brass Band led the way, and as the train pulled out for Oberlin played "Home, Sweet Home." At Oberlin "their reception was a grand affair!" According to a participant "It was understood before noon yesterday that they were released and would be in on the evening train, so a meeting in the church was appointed at 8 o'clock and the news circulated by means of hand bills and otherwise, and by half past seven many hundreds of citizens and students, including all the Fire companies in uniform, the Brass band &c &c were in waiting at the Depot. And at the same time the church was rapidly filling up. Cannons were fired and bells rung every 15 minutes until 12 o'clock. When the procession reached the church, bouquets and wreaths of flowers were thrown upon the Rescuers which were caught upon their arms or head & thus worn into the church, and as they marched in through the aisles & ascended the platform, such deafening and tremendous shouts of applause greeted them as it is impossible for my weak pen in any fitting words to describe. But it was

[19]J. M. Fitch to James Monroe, "Cuyahoga Co. Jail, 23 Apr. 1859," (Monroe MSS).

[20]On the Lorain County indictment see A. R. Webber, *History of Elyria,* 165–7.

*gratitude,* yes, *overwhelming gratitude* to God for his goodness to many a heart, as least, and prayer was in many a heart that God might have all the Glory."

"*All* Oberlin was there. Father Keep presided. We had music from the choir—(Marseilleise, &c.) organ, and bands, and speeches either long or short from each individual of the Rescuers, also from Sheriff Wightman, Jailor Smith, & Henry R. Smith, and others of Cleveland. Also from another Sheriff, The Probate Judge, Mr. Washburn, Mr. Horr &c of Elyria. Each one of these was cheered as never man was before in Oberlin. The house was nearly as much crowded as on Commencement days, but remarkable order was observed. When the Doxology was sung and the benediction pronounced it wanted ten minutes of midnight."[21]

The next day the senior class held a special reception in honor of Professor Peck to whom they presented a "complete set of Works of W. H. Prescott, in seventeen volumes, finely bound in sheep." One of the seniors delivered "an appropriate and feeling speech" and the professor "responded in remarks of several minutes length, during which the profuse tears of the class showed how strongly their hearts had been drawn to him during his confinement in Cleveland." On the 12th there was another great celebration when Simeon Bushnell was released and returned to take up his temporarily deferred duties as Russia Township Clerk. Professors Fairchild, Peck, Monroe, and the Hon. Joshua R. Giddings were among the speakers. Early in the following month at a general mass meeting, the matrons of Oberlin presented to J. M. Fitch and Mrs. Fitch "a beautiful sewing machine—Grover & Baker's best—in testimony of service rendered as superintendent of the Sabbath school." The part which he had lately played in Cleveland was not forgotten.[22]

"So the Government has been beaten at last," commented the *Plain Dealer* bitterly, "with law, Justice, and facts all on its side, and Oberlin, with its rebellious high law creed, is triumphant."[23]

Oberlin's spirit was definitely not broken. Even before the prisoners returned, an association called the Sons of Liberty was

[21]Copy of anonymous letter dated July 7, 1859 (Cowles-Little MSS).
[22]*Oberlin Students' Monthly,* I, 398 (Aug., 1859), and *Advocate and Family Guardian,* Oct. 15, 1859.
[23]Quoted in Cochran, *Op. Cit.,* 200.

formed, whose object was declared to be to see to it that no person should be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law. When Marshal Dayton visited Oberlin again in March, 1860, he was given an hour to get out and stay out. He was followed out of town by a band of Negroes who forced him to promise to resign as marshal and to give them the names of those who had been associated with him as informers. He named Postmaster Munson, Chauncey Wack and a certain Bela Farr.[24] One Sunday in April Professor Monroe and Ralph Plumb introduced at church a nearly white woman, formerly a slave, and then took up a collection to help her buy her mother. In the same month "A Rescuer Still" wrote to the local newspaper describing how he had recently received "a couple of pilgrims, whose exodus had, for many weary nights, been guided by Freedom's star."[25] In January, 1861, when Congressman Riddle's housemaid, Lucy, was seized as a fugitive in Cleveland, a number of Oberlinites went to the assistance of their erstwhile defender. Two omnibus loads of would-be rescuers went to the city but with less spectacular results this time. Four were jailed and the rest returned next day "with bunches on their bodies and sore heads, the effect of the policemen's clubs."[26]

The Rescue Case attracted attention throughout the nation and the world. It was one in the chain of events which led directly to the election of Lincoln and the Civil War. The reports of the American Anti-Slavery Society carried detailed accounts of it.[27] Frank Leslie ran a report of the case on the front page of his *Weekly* accompanied by a drawing from a photograph showing the Rescuers in front of the Cleveland jail.[28] Gerrit Smith contributed money for the aid of one of the student Rescuers.[29] A native of Philadelphia was so stimulated to sympathy for the College by the case that he concluded to present ninety volumes from his personal library for the use of the students. The "Edinburgh Ladies Emancipation Society" of Edinburgh, Scotland, sent Secretary Hill £10 as "a token of interest & sympathy for the

[24] *Lorain County News,* Mar. 14, 1860, and *Cleveland Leader,* Feb. 21, 1860, quoted in the *Annals of Cleveland.*

[25] *Lorain County News,* Apr. 11 and 25, 1860.

[26] Letters of W. R. Laine, Jan. 29, 1861, requoted from "Some Civil War Memories," *Oberlin Alumni Magazine,* XV, 11–12 (Oct., 1918).

[27] American Anti-Slavery Society, *Annual Report,* 1860, pages 63–74.

[28] Issue of May 7, 1859.

[29] W. E. Lincoln to Gerrit Smith, May 7, 1859 (Gerrit Smith MSS).

Oberlin rescuers."[30] The annual conference of the Michigan Congregational Association adopted resolutions of sympathy and approbation, and the Iowa State Congregational Association adopted similar resolutions and collected $46.00 for the Rescue Fund.[31] William Lloyd Garrison discovered a new fraternity with Oberlin and wrote to Professor James Monroe: "What a humiliating spectacle is presented to the world in the trials now going on at Cleveland of your humane and Christian citizens who so nobly delivered the spoiled out of the hands of the oppressor! . . . What a work of moral regeneration yet remains to be done in Ohio, in Massachusetts, throughout the North, in opposition to slavery and slave-hunting! But this very persecution will give a fresh impetus to our noble cause."[32]

* * *

While the Oberlin trial was in progress John Brown was visiting the Western Reserve making his preparations for Harper's Ferry. When he lectured in Cleveland in the latter part of March he shared the platform with his lieutenant, J. H. Kagi. Kagi went to visit the Rescuers in the jail. In August, Brown's eldest son, John Brown, Jr., came to Oberlin and probably recruited Lewis Sheridan Leary and John A. Copeland at that time. Leary was a harness-maker in Oberlin, and his nephew, Copeland, was a carpenter who had been a student in the Preparatory Department of the College. Leary approached Ralph Plumb for money to be used in "assisting slaves to escape." Plumb collected $17.50 for him, but asked no questions. Both of these Oberlin colored men were with Captain Brown when he raided Harper's Ferry in October.[33] Lewis Sheridan Leary was killed in the fight at the engine house; John Copeland was executed on December 16 for his participation.

There is every reason to believe that, despite the conservative

[30]Charles D. Cleveland to Hamilton Hill, June 23, 1859 (Treas. Off., File R), and Eliza Wigham to Hamilton Hill, Edinburgh, Scotland, July 22, 1859. (File M.)

[31]*The Congregational Churches of Michigan, 1842–1892* [1892], 249, and T. O. Douglass, *Pilgrims of Iowa* (Chicago—c. 1911), 139–140.

[32]Garrison to Monroe, Apr. 22, 1859 (Monroe MSS).

[33]Testimony of Ralph Plumb before the "Select Committee of the Senate appointed to inquire into the late invasion and seizure of the public property at Harper's Ferry," 36 Cong. 1 sess., *Senate Report* 278, pages 179–186; Robert S. Fletcher, "John Brown and Oberlin," *Oberlin Alumni Magazine,* XXVIII, 135–141 (Feb., 1932), and J. H. Langston, *From the Virginia Plantation to the National Capitol* (Hartford—1894), 190–7.

LEWIS SHERIDAN LEARY

Oberlin colored man who died in John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry, 1859

(Oberlin College Library)

attitude of a few,[34] most Oberlinites warmly sympathized with Brown and his followers. On the day of Brown's execution the bell tolled for an hour, and a mass-meeting in the Chapel was addressed by the leading citizens and faculty members. "Professor Peck surpassed himself," reported the students' magazine. "His summer's incarceration has given him a rich experience from which to draw, when about to speak for the downtrodden, or account the deeds of the martyrs of Liberty." James A. Thome, a Lane Rebel and member of the Board of Trustees, preached a funeral sermon for Brown at Hudson on December 8 and repeated it in the Oberlin College Chapel six days later. He also wrote eulogistic editorials on Brown for the *Evangelist*. "For ourselves," he declared, "we can see no signs of hallucination or of infatuation in John Brown. We esteem him as the Wise Man of our times." At a "joint collation of the men's literary societies, one of the toasts was 'John Brown: The hero of Harper's Ferry—the true representative of the American idea!'" It was a source of great satisfaction to many that Oberlin Negroes had shared in the raid and thus attained a sort of associate martyrdom. On the day set for the execution of Copeland "a meeting of sympathy for the bereaved parents and friends, and indignation against the civil oppression that is so fast driving good men mad, was held in the Chapel."[35] On the afternoon of Christmas Day of 1859 Professor Peck preached Copeland's funeral sermon in the First Church. A collection was taken up to pay the expenses of an unsuccessful attempt to recover the body and to erect a monument in the Oberlin cemetery.

* * *

Oberlin had hoped to reform the nation and the world—put an end to war, destroy the liquor evil, improve educational technique, elevate standards of personal morality, promote piety and abolish slavery—through the exercise of moral suasion. By a great nation-wide and world-wide emotional appeal the human race was to be brought to see the light of truth and righteousness as Oberlin saw it.

But moral suasion had failed for the most part to show great

[34] J. H. Fairchild, *Oberlin: the Colony and the College, 1833–1883*, pages 158–189.

[35] *Oberlin Students' Monthly*, II, 58–59 (Dec. 1859), and 93 (Jan., 1860). See also Robert S. Fletcher, "Ransom's John Brown Painting," *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, IX, 343–346 (Nov., 1940).

immediate results, and, as it failed, resort was made to direct action. The impatient (and enthusiasts are likely to be impatient) insisted on a short-cut to the goal—an appeal to force. The benevolent temperance revival gave way to the belligerent prohibition movement. The moral reformers abandoned their efforts to reform prostitutes and loose-livers and, instead, appealed to state legislatures to pass laws providing for stringent punishment of adulterers. The advocates of direct action against slavery were everywhere gaining ground over those who would approach the slaveholder as well as the slave as a brother with a soul to save.

The Kansas struggle and the Rescue Case had carried Oberlin far in this direction. From the defensive use of direct action in the Rescue Case to the aggressive action of the John Brown Raid was the next logical step. For Oberlin and for the Nation the anti-slavery debate was closed. It must have been clear to many that the final decision now would be made on the field of battle.

## CHAPTER XXVII

# *THE PROPAGANDA*

"THE very name of Oberlin became a power in the land," wrote the president of a neighboring college in the middle seventies. "There went forth from the little village planted in the forest, a voice which reached distant and unwilling ears and compelled attention. The voice came not from the college as a merely literary institution, but rather from the all-pervading spirit of the place—from teachers, pupils and patrons whose religion was largely philanthropy, and whose philanthropy was intensely religious. In a word, *Oberlin was a noble and potent ism with a college attached.*"[1]

The last statement is one of those exaggerations which serve to emphasize important truths. Oberlin, it would be more truly said, was an "ism" *as well as* a college. As such it was limited by no geographical bounds; it was a party, a faction in the church and the political and social community rather than merely a town and a college. There were true Oberlinites in London, in Edinburgh, in Manchester who had never been west of Land's End. There were many in New England who had never been beyond the Hudson. There were many more among the untravelled Yankee farmers of northern New York as well as on the Western Reserve. Reformers like Joshua Leavitt, Lewis Tappan, William A. Alcott, and Elihu Burritt were naturally and powerfully drawn to Oberlin as the most perfect exemplification of pure, Christian reform, and would have been glad to be classed as "honorary Oberlinites." Students who went out from Oberlin, with or without a diploma or degree, went out in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred as missionaries of Oberlinism, anxious to convert their parishioners, pupils, clients, customers and associates to the theology, philosophy and politics of Oberlin.

[1]E. B. Andrews, President of Denison University, in *A History of Education in the State of Ohio, Published by Authority of General Assembly* (Columbus—1876), 221. The italics are mine.

Major factors in the dissemination of Oberlinism were the *Oberlin Quarterly Review* and the *Oberlin Evangelist*. Both were founded especially as religious periodicals but dealt with associated matters. The *Review* was edited by President Mahan, assisted by William Cochran and, later, by Professor Finney. It was addressed primarily to the clergy. Publication began in August, 1845; the last number was issued in May, 1848. The grand object of the *Quarterly* was declared to be no less than the "*development, elucidation, and scientific arrangement of first principles in Religion, Moral Philosophy and Taste,*" including a "strict and impartial review" of "the rise, progress, and systematic peculiarities of Supralapsarian Calvinism, . . . the false assumptions, and anti-christian and demoralizing tendencies of the *Sensual School* of Philosophy, founded by Locke, and the *Transcendental School* founded by Kant; and the various and conflicting systems of church polity and ecclesiastical domination." This publication, however, included not only articles on "Holiness," "Simplicity of Moral Actions," and "Sanctification" but also an attack on the Odd Fellows as a dangerous secret society, a paper on "Fourierism" by Professor James Fairchild and articles on "Learning and Labor" and a denunciation of the anti-slavery "Come-outers" by James A. Thome.

Much more long-lived and influential and broader in the scope of subject matter treated was the *Oberlin Evangelist*, published every two weeks from November 1, 1838 through December 17, 1862. Undoubtedly the *Evangelist* was established primarily to expound the peculiar theological views held at Oberlin. A large portion of its space was taken up with sermons by Professor Finney, President Mahan, Professor Cowles and others. The official statement of objects printed in the first issue, however, listed as the subjects to be freely discussed: "Christian Education, Slavery and Abolition, Moral Reform, Missions, the Christian Sabbath, Revivals of Religion, and any other subject that may be seen to be of the highest importance." This promise was entirely fulfilled. There is hardly an issue without some editorials or news items dealing with the greater or lesser reforms. There are reports of anti-slavery conventions, local and national; articles from the pen of Elihu Burritt—"The Learned Blacksmith" peace advocate, attacks upon the theater and novel reading, accounts of the new medical practice of Isaac Jennings, letters

on health from Dr. W. A. Alcott, and discussions of intemperance of one form or another, as well as sermons and news of the Oberlin Institute and College. Secular interests were otherwise strictly excluded. News items of no propaganda value are entirely lacking. There were no advertisements except of books published in Oberlin, occasional musical conventions and other educational and philanthropic enterprises. Probably none of these advertisements were paid for. Sanctification and allied subjects occupied more space comparatively at the beginning. The attention given to reforms and particularly anti-slavery increased as time passed.

The "Oberlin Evangelist Association" which published this periodical was made up of the Prudential Committee and faculty of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute plus others chosen by these charter members. This association elected an editor annually and made arrangements with the local publisher. Horace C. Taylor was the first editor and was succeeded in 1844, after his "fall," by a committee of editors headed by President Mahan and including Henry Cowles, James A. Thome and George Whipple. This division of responsibility being found inconvenient, "the sole responsibility was . . . committed to Prof. Henry Cowles" later in the same year. Henry Cowles continued as editor throughout the remainder of the history of the publication, except for nine months in 1847 and 1848 when President Mahan was in charge. After 1848 Mr. Cowles devoted his entire time to the *Evangelist,* his professorship having been discontinued for reasons of economy. R. E. Gillett was the publisher and printer until July of 1844 when he was succeeded by J. M. Fitch, whose services from that date were only second in importance to those of the editor.[2] At the beginning of 1857 Fitch sold out to Shankland and Harmon.

The constitution of the association provided that the profits (if any) should be "faithfully appropriated to the cause of Christian education in this place"—that is, of course, to the Oberlin Collegiate Institute.[3] For some years there was a profit, a considerable part of which was used for the salaries of faculty

[2]Oberlin Evangelist Association, MS Minutes, 1839–43 (in the Oberlin College Library); *Oberlin Evangelist,* Dec. 20, 1843, July 3, 1844, July 16, 1845, Nov. 24 and Dec. 8, 1847, and "Editor of Oberlin Evangelist" in *Ibid.,* Sept. 13, 1848.

[3]Oberlin Evangelist Association, MS Minutes (O. C. Library).

members. Besides, the editor was paid a small salary and contributors received an honorarium for their articles published. President Mahan was paid $112.50 for his nine months' service as editor in 1847–48. Payments for contributions were at the rate of 75 cents a column at that time. Professor Thome made $75.00 in one year in this way, undoubtedly a very welcome addition to the small payments made from other sources on his regular salary.[4] In 1851, $350.00 from the surplus of the association was voted to be set apart at one time to help pay the expenses of the endowment drive.[5]

The paper passed through various vicissitudes. Always having eight pages, the size of the page was proudly increased from a modest 9 x 11½ inches to 10 x 13½ inches at the beginning of 1844, and Lewis Tappan commented favorably on the "new dress." In the early forties there was talk of moving the paper to New York City, but happily for Oberlin this plan was never carried out.[6] In the spring of 1848 the printing office burned, destroying Mr. Fitch's type and many of the records of subscribers and payments. One issue was printed out of town (March 15, 1848), and the issue of March 29 was published so late that it contains correspondence from Boston dated April 13! The next issue is dated May 10, all intermediate numbers being skipped in order to catch up. The circulation climbed to over 4300 in 1847 and 1848, but ten years later had fallen off to less than 2500. In 1857 Mr. Fitch used over $400.00 of his own funds to keep the press going. Suspension was threatened in the following year if the list of subscribers was not increased by at least a thousand. The *Evangelist,* however, struggled along until the last of 1862 when the interest in war and the financial inability of old subscribers gave it the *coup de grace.* "We receive too many letters saying—'My husband is in the army! or 'is slain in battle,' or 'my means are cut short'; 'stop my paper at the end of the year'; or 'till the war is over.' " The editor can be forgiven for making a brief summary of the *Evangelist's* achievements (and in a great part *his* achievements): in opposing slavery on Chris-

[4]Oberlin Evangelist Association, MSS (O. C. Library). President Mahan's bill is dated 1839, undoubtedly a slip for 1849.

[5]P. C. M., Sept. 29, 1851.

[6]Tappan to Cowles, Jan. 20, 1844, and to Finney, Dec. 9, 1842 (Tappan Letter Books).

tian principles, in ministering "to the spiritual culture of the heart and to the consequent improvement of the life," and, as the organ of the College and Theological Seminary, "a sympathetic nerve, binding Oberlin to many praying Christian hearts," aiding materially in building out of the struggling, nearly bankrupt Oberlin in 1838, the large and powerful, permanently founded Oberlin of 1862.[7]

If anything, Editor Cowles underestimated the importance of his paper. It was the *Evangelist* which, more than anything else, kept the Oberlin party together. When agents went abroad to collect the ever-needed funds they invariably carried with them the *Evangelist* subscription list as a guide to those favorably disposed toward the Institute and the point of view which it represented. Subscriptions were often sent free to generous donors, and copies were usually carried by agents to help prepare the way for later solicitations. More significant than the size of the circulation of the *Evangelist* was its wide distribution throughout New England, New York, Pennsylvania, and the Old Northwest. Unfortunately only partial lists survive, but the picture is easily reconstructed. A map of subscribers would look very much like the maps of student homes (see pages 508–509), with perhaps an even greater concentration in western New England and upstate New York. Subscribers in towns in New York from *Oswego* alphabetically through *Youngstown* include names from forty-seven different counties. Many cities were represented: there were twenty-three subscribers in Poughkeepsie, twelve in Rome, fifty-five in Rochester, eleven in Rensselaersville, fifteen in Syracuse, twenty-eight in Troy (including P. P. Stewart), eight in Utica, twelve in Warsaw, and fifteen up in Watertown.[8] In some cases these names represent persons to whom the paper was sent gratuitously, but most of them were paying subscribers and loyal and earnest advocates of Oberlinian principles, lovers of reform and practical piety. One of their number, a resident of one of the smaller New York towns, spoke for his fellows in verses published in 1850 when there was talk of enlarging and secularizing the paper:

[7]Oberlin Evangelist Association MSS, and *Oberlin Evangelist*, Jan. 20, 1858, Nov. 5, Dec. 3 and 17, 1862.

[8]"List of Subscribers to the Oberlin Evangelist in New York State—Places from Letters O to Y" (Misc. Archives).

THE OBERLIN EVANGELIST

That choice little sheet—I love it most dearly;
I love the sweet principle truth which it brings,
And should, from my heart, regret most sincerely
To have it the vehicle of *common place* things.

I love the choice sermons of dear brother Finney;
So full of instruction, so pure, and so good;
The deductions so clear, he can not but win thee
To share his rich viands of spiritual food.

I love the pure doctrine of present salvation
Which shines on its pages so full and so clear—
May it spread through the length and the breadth of
the nation,
Till darkness and error shall both disappear.

I love its staunch doctrines of moral reform,
Its pleas for the brethren, for freedom and peace;
Its truths will endure, invigor and warm,
While falsehood must die, and prejudice cease.

So pray, brother Fitch, let the paper remain
In its present nice snug little form;
It has room enough now, the truth to maintain,
The strongholds of error to battle and storm.[9]

The financial agents, faculty, and trustees were also propagandists of Oberlinism. The agents first "sold" Oberlin to prospective donors and then made their appeal for funds. The abler of them, like William Dawes and Joab Seeley, left a trail of loyal Oberlinites behind them. Keep and Dawes not only collected thirty thousand dollars on their English mission but more or less successfully "Oberlinized" England.

Some of the faculty and trustees were in demand as preachers and lecturers. Amasa Walker, Norton Townshend, James Monroe, in their capacities as political speakers and legislators, aided also in spreading the net. President Mahan and President Finney carried the name of Oberlin up and down the nation and abroad.

[9]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Jan. 2, 1850.

To many, Oberlin was known as Finney's college. Their writings likewise must be considered a part of the Oberlin propaganda.

But most important of all was the work of the eleven thousand former Oberlin students, who went out as preachers, teachers, missionaries, and into every walk of life in every part of the country and even to foreign countries. Literally thousands became ministers, teachers, and ministers' wives; hundreds became missionaries; others entered the professions or edited papers; some were employed as lecturers by religious and reform societies. Many undertook to distribute reform and religious tracts and even made it a profession. In 1846 it was proposed to establish a special "Colporteur Department" for the education of young men intending to devote themselves to the distribution of propaganda literature.[10] All, though they may have specialized in some one phase of the campaign for the establishment of the Millennium, were reformers *in general,* supporting anti-slavery, peace, temperance and moral reform as well as their particular hobby. All likewise were *Christian* reformers, working for revivals, missions and Bible societies, opposing "come-outerism," but anxious to purge the church of worldly, sinful and reactionary influences in order to make of it a great world reform society. Wherever there was work to be done for *Christian* reform, Oberlin alumni and present students were sure to be doing it. Upon returning from the Christian Anti-Slavery Convention at Chicago in 1851, President Finney reported: "I have never met elsewhere so many of our students who have gone abroad to bear their testimony for God. It was not to me a matter of pride, but of devout thanksgiving to God. There I saw more than I had ever seen before what those men are doing who have gone forth from these halls of study and prayer. I saw how they are struggling to sustain every good cause, and with what zeal and self-denial they are spending and being spent in God's work."[11]

[10]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Jan. 21, 1846. As to the number of missionaries, in 1847 it was estimated that a larger proportion of graduates from the Theological Department had become missionaries than from any other seminary in the land, and that Oberlin had sent out more in absolute numbers than any except Andover and Princeton. (*Oberlin Evangelist,* June 23, 1847). In 1862 it was declared that 92 Oberlin students had entered the field of foreign missions, and many more had gone into home missions (*Oberlin Evangelist,* Oct. 8, 1862). A very large number went South during Reconstruction under the A.M.A.

[11]"Address to the Graduating Class of Oberlin College" in the *Oberlin Evangelist,* Sept. 10, 1851.

The hundreds of youths who went out from Oberlin to the winter schools every year taught a new "three r's" as well as the old: "Religion, Reform, and Republicanism." "Several hundred of the pupils engage every winter in teaching schools of every grade," wrote Professor Hudson in 1847. "They carry with them high attainments, and better modes of teaching, than were before common in the schools they have taught. . . . *Most of these teachers exert a healthful moral and religious influence on their pupils.*"[12] The young Oberlin teachers in country schools held prayer-meetings as well as spelling-bees and examined their pupils on the state of their souls as well as their knowledge of multiplication. One young man told proudly of how the children gathered around his desk at recess and sang "Mid Scenes of Confusion," while the "Spirit of God was sensibly present," and how on another day a little girl stayed after school "and, kneeling down, confessed her sins and gave herself to Christ in a most melting manner."[13]

In 1841, a young lady teacher wrote home of the people in her district at Avon, Ohio: "They seemed wrapt in selfishness, following their own lusts & desires. They were light, trifling & full of jestings & you know these things are not consistent with piety. It is our duty to be cheerful but not vain. They needed reforming in everything almost, but I did not feel that they were in such a state yet that I could reprove them for their good on any thing but the subject of religion. I could tell them of the love of Christ & their ingratitude to him but the smaller things which tend to perfect the christian character, such as denying ourselves the superfluities of life, destroying our lives by lacing & the evils of other bad habits, I felt would immediately call forth the epithet, Oberlinism, & I thought it better not to introduce such subjects until their minds were more prepared to receive them."[14] Some, however, attempted instruction, by example or precept, in the "smaller things which tend to perfect the Christian character." Welcome Benham always refused tea and coffee when "boarding round." "In respect to the disuse of tea & coffee I have said but little farther than my example," he wrote to Secre-

[12]T. B. H. in the *Independent,* Jan. 29, 1857.

[13]"Incidents in a Winter School" in the *Oberlin Evangelist,* May 7, 1856, and W. E. Benham to Levi Burnell, Dec. 22, 1839 (Treas. Off., File A).

[14]Hannah [and Warren] Warner to parents, Oberlin, Dec. 24, 1841–Feb. 16, 1842 (Oberlin College Library).

tary Burnell. "When through blind love to me I have been earnestly solicited to participate with them in it, I have kindly told the reasons why I refused. Some of my scholars have left it and now join with me in my dish of milk (which abounds here)."[15]

Always the Oberlin teachers were faithful advocates of the cause of the "Brother and Slave." In 1844 Mary Plumb Fairchild wrote from Michigan to her future husband of her experiences in school teaching. It seems that she occasionally took time off to tell the pupils a story or two. "I always intended to have a good moral to the tale," she wrote. "Some times I tell them about the poor heathen children, and ask them what they can do to send the Bible to them. Then I tell them about the slaves—this subject seems to interest them as much as any. One day when their feelings had all been roused by an anti-slavery story, I asked them if they could tell me what an abolitionist is. They were all silent, so I told them that it was one who wished to have the slaves free, and who would do all that he could to make them so. They all agreed that they were abolitionists. I know not how firm they may be but I believe they are at present sincere. There are very few abolitionists in the place and I suppose it would not be so easy to convert the older people as the children."[16]

Sometimes Oberlin's student teachers even invaded the slave states direct from the fount of abolitionism. In the late fifties several taught in Madison, Rockcastle, and Estell counties in Kentucky "in the midst of a slaveholding community," never hesitating however to declare:

> "I am an abolitionist,
> And glory in the name."

At the public exercises at these schools the pupils showed how thoroughly they had been converted by their teachers, "The compositions and orations were full and free in expressing the compassion of the pupils for the slave, and their condemnation of oppression." On one occasion one "young gentleman pronounced with great power a thrilling poem entitled The Suicide, representing a fugitive, torn and bleeding, plunging into a river at the approach of dogs and men pursuing." One of the school-

[15]Benham to Burnell, Dec. 22, 1839.
[16]"Mary" to Cyrus H. Baldwin, Jan. 18, 1844 (lent by C. G. Baldwin).

houses was burned down, but the work continued elsewhere.[17] After the slaves were freed the Oberlinites were equally enthusiastic advocates of civil rights and political suffrage for the Negro.[18]

Oberlin students and graduates also carried with them wherever they went a better understanding of the importance of physical exercise, a love of music and, often, the ability to lead singing or to play an instrument, an appreciation of the mental and moral capacities of woman, and a belief in training for practical life, the influence of which in the Middle West it is entirely impossible to gauge or even estimate.

Sending out its ministers and "pious school teachers," a "band of self-denying, hardy, intelligent, efficient laborers, of both sexes," to save souls, to promote "every judicious and enlightened reform," and especially to work "for the annihilation of the chattell principle as applied to man," Oberlin had realized much of Shipherd's grand dream of 1832 and '33.

[17]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Apr. 9, 1856 and Mar. 4, 1857; Otis B. Waters, "An Abolitionist Where He Wasn't Wanted" in *Oberlin Students' Monthly,* I, 383–386 (Aug., 1859), and Lloyd Hennings, "The American Missionary Association, a Christian Anti-Slavery Society" (a MS Thesis in the O. C. Lib.), 139–142.

[18]J. G. Fraser, MS Diary, Jan. 7, 1866.

*Book Three*

# The Struggle for Existence

" . . . 76 cents in the vaults."

Oberlin Collegiate Institute's
Treasurer's Day Book, June 27, 1849

## CHAPTER XXVIII

# *"THE DEVIL AND THE WORLD"*

> "The Devil, the world & carnal professors are determined that Ob[n] shall not rise."
>
> J. J. SHIPHERD, April 14, 1834.

> "I hope you will keep things regular. Rely upon it all your errors will fly the land through. . . . Oberlin is a spectacle. Not a few are waiting and watching."
>
> JOHN KEEP TO MAHAN, FINNEY, MORGAN AND COWLES, July 1, 1836.

IN THE first ten years of its history Oberlin was tried in the fires of adversity. In this period it not only repeatedly faced financial bankruptcy but was forced to cope with the jealous rivalry of Western Reserve College, charges of fundamental religious heresy, violent dissension in the faculty, the opposition of the powerful National Education Society, a general assault on the character of the institution by an able though unprincipled student, attacks from members of the state legislature, and two nauseous scandals.

When Oberlin was founded the Western Reserve College, established at Hudson in 1826 by the Plan-of-Union Presbyterians of the Reserve, was just struggling into active existence. As late as 1829 there were only six students in its collegiate department. In 1834 it listed 87 students altogether. It was still as much in need of funds as of students. Naturally, therefore, there were many among its friends and leaders who viewed the appearance of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute with considerable alarm. The *Ohio Observer,* published at Hudson and essentially an organ of the college, was frankly critical of Shipherd and his scheme. There was no need and no room, they held, for another institution in Ohio—"A State which has already five or six half-starved Colleges, one of which, founded by the charities of the benevolent, is within forty miles of Oberlin, and is yet very inadequately sustained by funds and students." Nor did the correspondents and editors of this paper hesitate to reflect upon the

competence and honesty of the founders of Oberlin. The seeds of a not too friendly rivalry were thus early sown.[1]

Shipherd always insisted that he did not intend that Oberlin should compete with the school at Hudson. The field of Christian education in the New West was large enough for all, he declared.[2] Some people took him at his word and gave their friendly support to both schools. Judge Henry Brown, the first president of the Oberlin Board of Trustees, had been one of the founders of the college at Hudson and continued to be one of its most influential trustees. It was supposed by Brown and by others like the Rev. Henry Cowles of Austinburg that the young men from Oberlin would go to Hudson for their theological, and perhaps for their collegiate, training. When the Theological Course was established at Oberlin in 1835 the break was completed. Judge Brown resigned from the Oberlin Board of Trustees; Henry Cowles turned his back on Hudson, much to the disappointment of the *Ohio Observer* and joined the Oberlin faculty.

The theological department at Hudson was still a paper scheme, but when it was known that Finney had been appointed to the Professorship of Theology at Oberlin, the Western Reserve authorities got busy and invited him to Hudson. The trustees of that college elected him "Professor of Pastoral Theology and Learned Eloquence." As late as March of 1835 John Keep, the new head of the Oberlin Board of Trustees, expressed the wish that Finney, Morgan and the Lane Rebels might go to Hudson instead of to Oberlin.[3] Henry Cowles begged Shipherd to "forego the organization of a theological department at Oberlin—at least for the present—and let it go to Hudson." He very much feared that "jealousies and heartburnings and the heresy hunting spirit" would characterize the relations of two theological institutions so near to each other.[4] Fifty-three clergymen of the Western Reserve area signed a petition urging Finney to go to Hudson.[5] But Arthur Tappan said *No*. "I sincerely hope," Tappan wrote to Shipherd in May, "he [Finney] will not listen a moment to any such proposition, for nothing short of a thorough change in the

[1] *Ohio Observer* (Hudson), June 12 and July 17, 1834.
[2] Shipherd in the *Ohio Atlas and Elyria Advertiser*, Oct. 17, 1833.
[3] John Keep to Finney, Mar. 10, 1835 (Finney MSS).
[4] Henry Cowles to Shipherd, May 13, 1835 (Treas. Off., File B).
[5] George E. Pierce (President of W. R. College) to Finney, May 12, 1835 (Finney MSS).

men who govern that Institution [Western Reserve College], . . . would insure to the friends of liberal sentiments the glorious results now confidently anticipated from Oberlin."[6]

Western Reserve suffered severely from the competition of Oberlin, there is no doubt. As we have seen, several of the more liberal students left and went to Oberlin. While Oberlin's enrollment tripled from 1834 to 1835; the enrollment at Hudson increased only from 87 to 107. By 1841, Oberlin's student body passed the five hundred mark; Western Reserve had 140. In 1852 Oberlin enrolled over a thousand; Reserve's enrollment had declined to 23 exclusive of the medical students! There were no junior and senior classes. The theological department had ceased to exist. In the late fifties and sixties when Oberlin's student body usually considerably exceeded a thousand, the number of students at Reserve averaged about a hundred. Relations were much more friendly in the fifties and later. In 1858 President Hitchcock of Western Reserve delivered the Commencement Address to the Oberlin literary societies. In 1859 Ex-President Pierce attended the Oberlin Commencement and commented very favorably on it, even commending coeducation.[7] From the comparison of statistics given it is evident that rivalry from Hudson was not much to be feared in the later period, anyway. But in the thirties and early forties it was a more serious matter.

In these years Oberlin's peculiarities, mistakes, and misfortunes (and they were many) were eagerly seized upon by the partisans of Western Reserve as ammunition for their unrelenting attacks. When Oberlin was charged with maintaining heretical theological doctrines, Reserve became particularly anxious to maintain the purity of the orthodox Christian faith. When a member of the Oberlin faculty was dismissed, the *Ohio Observer* published his parting thrusts *in extenso*. When the American Education Society declared its intention to cease giving financial aid to students at Oberlin because of the lack of emphasis on Greek and Latin, friends of Oberlin pointed out that the western representative of the society was a professor at Hudson. Oberlin, on its part, claimed a monopoly of the reform spirit in the North-

[6]Arthur Tappan to Shipherd, May 6, 1835 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

[7]"Ex. Pres. Geo. E. Pierce sd. to Father Keep, August, /59," MS in Henry Cowles' handwriting in Misc. Archives.

west and denounced Western Reserve College as the seat of reaction and ally of the slaveholder.

Most Christians in the North looked upon Oberlin's doctrine of "Sanctification" or "Perfectionism," justly or unjustly, as a most dangerous and unchristian heresy. Probably more ministers were turned against Oberlin because of her stand on this matter than for any other reason. Synods passed resolutions excluding Oberlin ministers from their pulpits and denying ordination to Oberlin graduates because of it. Donors ceased their contributions in horror of it. Prof. Henry Cowles' father wrote to him: "Before the publication of the *Evangelist* my feelings were pretty strongly enlisted in favor of Oberlin . . . , but since reading the publications of Mahan and Phinney [*sic*] my views and expectations are much changed." In 1843 a member of the Oberlin Board of Trustees resigned for fear his parishioners and associates might think him an "Oberlin Perfectionist."[8] The *Ohio Observer* (also published as the *Cleveland Observer*) filled many columns with editorials and correspondence denouncing the Oberlin heresy.

Professor John P. Cowles greatly injured the Oberlin name by his attacks. He seems to have been a real scholar and man of determined character, as set in his views as was Mahan. Unfortunately for Oberlin his views did not agree with those of his colleagues. He was a champion of the classics; he considered dietetic reforms silly; he opposed "joint education of the sexes," and he publicly attacked "Sanctification" and its authors. As he, himself, later wrote, he was "at all times a leading opposer to the wild schemes and notions that were constantly springing up in Oberlin." President Mahan was never the man to bide with open opposition, and, as early as 1837, we find him writing to Finney of Professor John Cowles' unchristian conduct and begging Finney to use his good offices to bring Cowles to reason.[9] There is little doubt that Cowles was tactless in his assaults upon Mahan and Finney and their doctrines from the very Oberlin pulpit. There is little doubt, on the other hand, that Mahan and his associates were impatient of criticism. In June of 1839 Finney

[8]Samuel Cowles to Henry Cowles, Dec. 30, 1839 (Cowles-Little MSS), and Carlus Smith to Asa Mahan, May 27, 1843 (Trustees' MSS, 1843, Misc. Archives). See also on Oberlin's peculiar theology pages 223–229 above.

[9]Asa Mahan to Finney, July 22, 1837 (Finney MSS).

wrote the recalcitrant professor a letter in which he reproached him with having "disappointed & pained some of your best friends."[10] In October the trustees resolved "that the connexion of Prof. John P. Cowles with this Institution under present circumstances is undesirable."[11] In the spring of 1840 he opened a "School for Young Men" at Elyria.[12]

But John P. Cowles was not the man to retreat without firing a shot; he fired a whole broadside—a broadside of sixteen letters attacking Oberlin, which were published in the *Observer* from November 6, 1839, to April 1, 1840. Here was something choice for Oberlin's enemies; so great was the demand for the issue containing the first letter that the copies printed were soon exhausted and an advertisement was inserted early in December offering to buy back a limited number.[13]

Cowles declared that the combining of men and women in the same classes was forced on the young ladies against their expressed will. Much of the teaching, he said, was unscholarly and the trustees were, for the most part, wholly incompetent. He insisted that his dismissal was due to his support of the classics, his bringing pepper to the commons table, his opposition to "joint education" and his public criticism of the doctrine of Sanctification. About half of his letters were taken up with denunciation of the peculiar Oberlin theological doctrine. Freedom of discussion in Oberlin, said the dismissed professor, was dead. Mahan was a tyrant and sometimes overruled important decisions of the faculty. Finney was equally assertive and unwilling to listen to criticism. "You have so thoroughly persuaded yourselves that Oberlin is God, and God is Oberlin," he chided them, "that you will doubtless think me an heir to the bottomless pit because I have withstood the 'Deity in you.' "[14]

To many loyal supporters of Oberlin it seemed that Cowles had been tempted of the Devil and had fallen from Grace. He was "devoid of *all* Christian feeling," they felt, and "almost beside himself."[15] "But what shall we think of the conduct of J. P.

[10]Finney to J. P. Cowles, June 29, 1839 (Finney MSS).
[11]T. M., Oct. 21, 1839.
[12]Advertisement of a "School for Young Men" in the *Cleveland Observer,* Apr. 16, 1840.
[13]*Cleveland Observer* (successor to the *Ohio Observer),* Dec. 4, 1839.
[14]*Ibid.,* Jan. 1, 1840.
[15]Sarah Ingersoll to G. Northrop, Dec. 16, 1839 (lent by Mrs. Fredrich Lehmann, Oberlin).

Cowles?" wrote James A. Thome to Levi Burnell. "I tremble for him 'lest haply he be found fighting against God.' . . . May the Lord bear with him & yet bring him to repentance."[16] But Oberlin's enemies undoubtedly believed it all, the uninformed and disinterested, much of it. Even the conscientious historian of the twentieth century must accept the general truthfulness of these letters and recognize their value as historical source. At the time, such attacks, coming from a former member of the Oberlin faculty, a graduate of Yale and a man with an enviable reputation as a Christian and a scholar, dealt a terrific body blow to the already tottering Oberlin reputation.

At about the same time an attack came from another quarter. As part of the campaign to educate ministers, for the West especially, the American Education Society was founded in 1815. The society collected funds from benevolent Christians all over the land and dispensed them to "hopefully pious" and deserving students in the various colleges. Oberlin and the society clashed from the very beginning. In 1834 and 1835 it was hoped that Oberlin students could support themselves under the manual labor system, and it was feared that grants from the American Education Society would tend to make the recipients unwilling to work and thus undermine that system. In March of 1835 the faculty voted unanimously against "recommending able bodied young men to the Education Society for the purpose of securing aid from them."[17] Two months later the trustees ordered an investigation of the rumor that two Oberlin students were receiving such aid.[18] By 1836, however, they were called upon to reverse themselves, when it became sufficiently patent that most "indigent students" would be unable to pay their way entirely by manual labor and school teaching. Early in that year, therefore, the trustees declared themselves "willing that Students in our Institution should enjoy the patronage of that [American Education] Society with the advice and at the discretion of the Faculty." In the autumn they went further and declared their readiness to "recommend to the patronage of the American Education Society, those Students . . . whose circumstances and character shall seem in the judgment of the Faculty to entitle

[16]Thome to Burnell, Apr. 3, 1840 (Treas. Off., File I).
[17]F. M., Mar. 17, 1835. See also F. M., Apr. 21, 1835.
[18]T. M., May 28, 1835.

them to such aid."[19] Thus completely had the leaders at Oberlin changed front.

Now it was the turn of the Western Reserve Education Society (the local branch of the national society, controlled largely by Western Reserve College men) to demur. They charged that Oberlin did not give wholehearted support to the raising of funds for scholarship aid, nor even formal lip service. The impression created by Oberlin *Catalogues* and Oberlin agents that students there could support themselves without outside assistance, they said, hindered the efforts of others to raise funds for student aid. To meet this rather just criticism Professor Morgan issued a statement in behalf of the Oberlin faculty in April of 1837 disabusing young men of "the impression that, without any other resource than the daily labor of three hours, they can fully support themselves and will have no need of the assistance of friends or of any society." Though the *Observer* felt that the language employed was "not so frank, full and direct as was desirable," it was accepted as sufficient by the officers of the society, and several Oberlin students received aid from that organization during the next two years.[20]

Early in 1837 a Committee of Inquiry was appointed by the Central Branch of the American Education Society to investigate the course of study at Oberlin and determine whether they were justified in continuing to give aid to young men preparing for the ministry there. Of course, Oberlin's scanty course of classical studies drew critical attention. Oberlinites replied that the additional work in Hebrew and in the Greek of the New Testament counterbalanced the deficiency in Latin and profane Greek. But the New England clergymen who controlled the policies of the society were stern defenders of thorough classical training; and at a meeting of the governing board of the American Education Society, on December 25, 1838, it was

> RESOLVED, That the deficiencies in the classical and theological training of students at the Oberlin Institute, are such, that the Board judge it inconsistent with the rules of this Society, to render further aid to students pursuing study at that Institution.

[19]T. M., Feb. 10, and Sept. 13, 1836.

[20]*New York Evangelist,* Apr. 28, 1837; *Ohio Observer,* Jan. 12, and Apr. 13, 1837.

Oberlinites claimed that they had not been given a fair trial, that Oberlin leaders had not been allowed to testify in defence of their curriculum, that only Oberlin's enemies had been heard. Oberlin had become the victim, they said, of intolerable injustice, of prejudice, and of the rivalry of Western Reserve College. An Oberlin Education Society was immediately formed and appeals made for money and supplies for the Oberlin students thus cut off from outside aid. The next catalogue contained a comparison of the curriculum of Oberlin with that of Yale which purposed to show that the course at Oberlin was equal in every way to that of the New Haven college except for the shorter readings in Latin and classical Greek. But Oberlin's reputation had, of course, been lowered another notch in the view of conservative intellectuals everywhere and of New Englanders in particular.[21]

The Lane Seminary authorities, naturally, did not look upon Oberlin with any greater enthusiasm than did those of Western Reserve College. Lyman Beecher, speaking before students at Miami University in the autumn of 1835, assailed the "extensive, wholesale, intellectual manufactory" containing "all the departments of instruction, male and female, from the infant school till the topstone is laid of the university."[22] The Oberlin Institute was, of course, the only notable example of such a school. In 1843 Lane Seminary joined with Western Reserve College, Marietta, Wabash and Illinois College to divert eastern funds away from Oberlin. They formed the Society for the Promotion of Collegiate and Theological Education at the West to unify and control the raising of funds for Yankee, "Presbygational" educational institutions in the Mississippi Valley. It was specifically announced that none of the funds raised would go to unorthodox, radical, experimental institutions which sponsored dangerous social "ultraisms."[23]

In 1837 a dismissed Oberlin student had published an eighty-

[21] *Oberlin Evangelist,* Apr. 10, 1839; *Cleveland Observer,* July 24, 1839; and J. P. Cowles in *Ibid.,* Nov. 20, 1839. A "Circular" dated June 10, 1839, was sent out from Oberlin asking financial aid. The list of agents named is interesting: John M. Sterling, Cleveland; Joab Austin, Austinburg; Owen Brown, Hudson; F. D. Parish, Sandusky City; Robert Stuart, Detroit; George A. Avery, Rochester; Rev. F. Shipherd, Walton, N. Y.; George Cragin and William Morgan, New York City, and Charles C. Barry, Boston.

[22] *Address . . . Miami University, Sept. 29, 1835* (Cincinnati—1835), 40.

[23] Donald G. Tewkesbury. *The Founding of American Colleges and Universities before the Civil War* (New York—1932), 10–13, and *Reports* of the society.

two page assault on Oberlin which is scarcely matched for bitterness and scandalous libel in the controversial literature of the period. Delazon Smith's *History of Oberlin, or New Lights of the West,* published at Cleveland and more commonly known by its cover title, *Oberlin Unmasked,* was a juicy bit for the special enemies of Oberlin, the scandal mongers, and the critics of the church and of the Christian colleges generally. Smith depicted the Oberlin students, faculty and townsmen as Negro-worshippers and advocates of miscegenation. The system of dietetics he described as little short of insanity and resulting in injury to health and even in death. The faculty, he said, were tyrannical ranters, absolutely intolerant of differences of opinion. The financial management was dishonest and inefficient. Joint education of the sexes, he described, with some erotic detail, as an immoral system which led in practice in Oberlin to decidedly immoral relations between the students of opposite sex. He called upon the "Citizens of the Republic" to denounce these "blood-suckers" and "desperadoes" and "lash them naked through her dominions."[24]

Delazon Smith came to Oberlin from Conewango, N. Y. in 1834 or 1835. He was born at New Berlin, Chenango County, N. Y., on October 5, 1816.[25] When he was about fifteen he went to Conewango as a tailor's apprentice. There, he is said to have become "profligate" and associated "with the more immoral part of the community." When, however, a revival took place in the community and a "large number of the youth were hopefully converted," young Smith "manifested a hope in believing and was admitted a member of [the] church."[26] He decided to enter the ministry and shortly afterward went to the Oberlin Institute to prepare.

In the thirties the "free thinkers" in America were aggressive and well organized. They sponsored a number of periodicals through which they conducted a violent attack upon "priestcraft," the Bible and "superstition" in general. One of the most

[24]The author has had occasion to discover by checking with other sources that there are many truthful statements in the pamphlet, but the bright side is entirely left out and the worst interpretation is always placed on the facts narrated. This pamphlet gives about as true a picture of early Oberlin as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* does of slavery in the South.

[25]*Biographical Directory of the American Congress,* 1774–1927, (Washington—1928); and Obituary in *Oregon Democrat,* Nov. 27, 1860, cited by Miss Nellie B. Pipes in a letter to the author, Portland, Oregon, May 25, 1932.

[26]Henry Day to Levi Burnell, July 14, 1837 (Treas. Off., File B).

important of these journals was the *Boston Investigator,* edited by Abner Kneeland, which was to be found in the reading room of the Oberlin Society of Inquiry in 1836. In May of that year the faculty "advised" the society to drop it.[27] In 1836 also "Dr." Samuel Underhill established his *Cleveland Liberalist* in which he strove to counteract "the doctrine of mystery, miracle, fire and brimstone" with "rationality, truth, evidence, reason and common sense." "Friends of truth, liberality and just-privileges" in Cleveland and vicinity listened enthusiastically to his lectures in "Italian Hall."[28]

Several Oberlin students joined the anti-religious brotherhood! William Sheffield, David L. Parker, Alexander H. Thompson, Richard H. Thompson and Delazon Smith were among the number. In November of 1836 Smith announced to the Oberlin church, of which he had become a member upon entering the Institute, his total disavowal of the Christian religion. We are not surprised to hear that "this announcement drew down upon [his] head the frowns and anathemas" of the "brethren."[29] The Oberlin Fathers were not likely long to tolerate what they considered atheism in their midst. Parker and R. H. Thompson were dismissed by the faculty on the 29th of October, 1836.[30] Asahel Munger, a colonist and later a missionary in Oregon, brought charges against Smith before the church in February. A committee headed by Professor Morgan, being appointed to confer with him, reported that "said Delazon Smith distinctly stated that he does not believe in the divine origin of the Bible or in the efficacy of prayer." On March 3, 1837, he was excommunicated by a unanimous vote.[31] He was likewise expelled from the literary societies of which he was a member. He continued to stay in town, and in June certain Oberlinites brought charges against him which resulted in his being arrested and conveyed to the county jail at Elyria, where, however, he was released and

[27]F. M., May 4, 1836. On Kneeland *cf.* the *D. A. B.,* and H. S. Commager, "The Blasphemy of Abner Kneeland." *New England Quarterly,* VIII, 29–41 (Mar., 1935).

[28]Smith in *Cleveland Liberalist,* July 15, 1837. Underhill was also a Lecturer on "Animal Magnetism" and an opponent of abolitionism. See citations in the *Annals of Cleveland* 1836–1843.

[29]Smith in *Ibid.,* July 22, 1937.

[30]*F. M.,* Oct. 29, 1836.

[31]Oberlin Church Records, 1834–39, MS., Feb. 24 and Mar. 3, 1837.

the arrest declared illegal.[32] He wisely did not return but went on to Cleveland, where Dr. Underhill received him with open arms. William Sheffield was expelled from the Institute early in July for "irreverent & blasphemous expressions with regard to the deity," and, a week later, excommunicated from the church for "open and avowed" infidelity.[33] No official action seems to have been taken against A. H. Thompson, but his name disappears from the lists of students at about the same time. Aggressive "free-thinking" was thus rooted out of Oberlin.

But at least two of these men struck back at their "persecutors." Three years later Parker was furnishing information to those members of the Ohio State legislature who were working for the revocation of the Oberlin Institute charter.[34] When Smith was so unceremoniously ushered out of Oberlin he carried with him the manuscript of his reply, "Oberlin Unmasked," which he had already announced for publication through the columns of the *Liberalist*. In the middle of August, Smith and Underhill had two thousand copies of this pamphlet ready for distribution at 37½ cents a copy or three dollars a dozen. "It must prove a cure for wild fanaticism . . . ," the public was told. "It will strip the masks from the Rev. hypocrites, and expose them to the lash of public opinion . . . Mariah Monk will be supplanted by a reality."[35]

Smith dealt in detail with the war on the Classics, the manual labor system, the Graham system, the system of joint education ("Connexion of male and female departments"), revivalism and immorality in the church, abolitionism and intolerance. His case was considerably strengthened by a letter written by N. P. Fletcher, a former trustee of the Institute, which he was able to quote *in toto,* a letter which charged certain responsible officers with incompetence and dishonesty.[36] Of course, such a spicy

[32]Smith in *Cleveland Liberalist,* July 27, 1837. Reprinted in his *History of Oberlin,* 78–82.

[33]F. M., July 7, 1837, and Oberlin Church MS Records, 1834–39, June 30 and July 14, 1837.

[34]*Senate Journal,* Mar. 10, 1840, cited in Ellsworth, "Oberlin and the Anti-Slavery Movement up to the Civil War" (MS), 166.

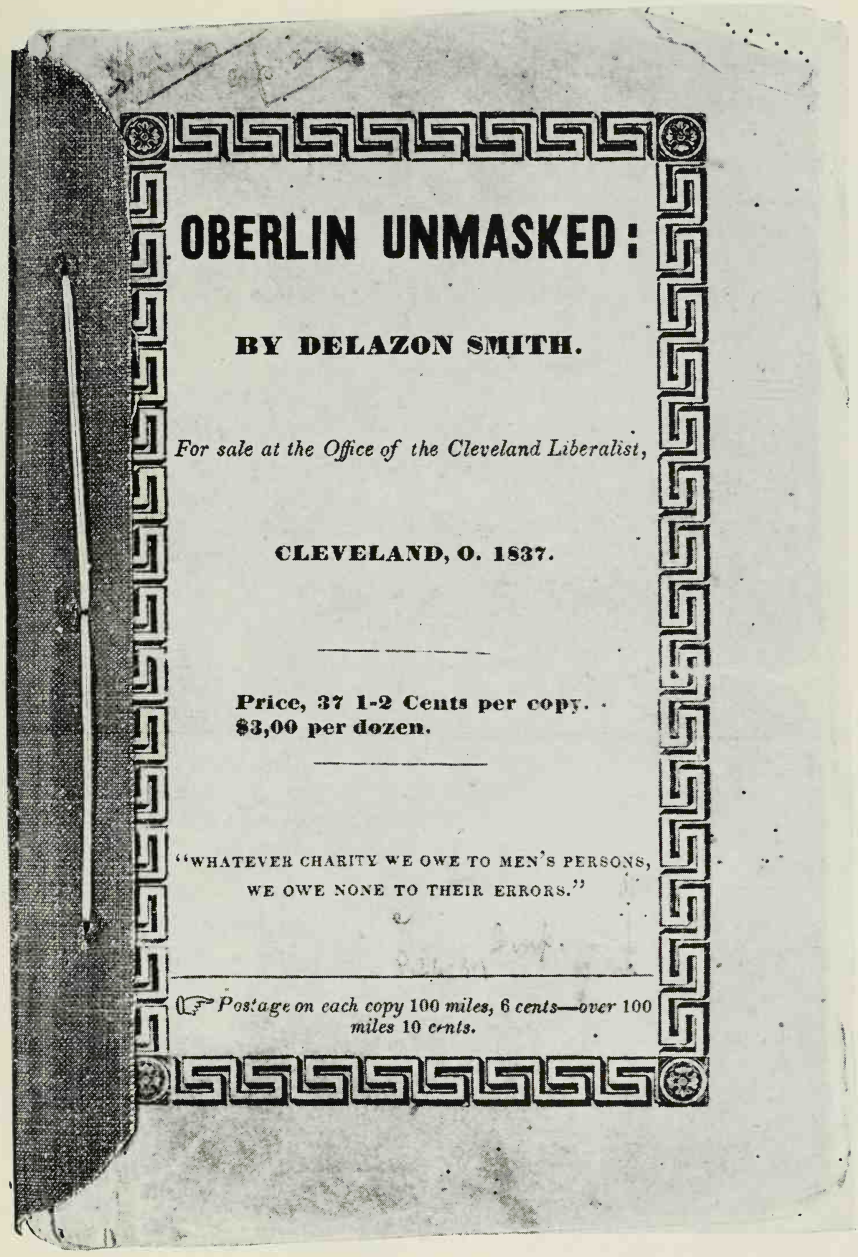
[35]*Cleveland Liberalist,* Aug. 19, 1837.

[36]Fletcher wrote an implied denial of the authenticity of the letter. *Liberalist,* Sept. 16, 1837. —But Smith was telling the truth in this case at least, as the original of the letter in Fletcher's handwriting and tallying practically word for word with the copy in Smith's pamphlet is still in the Misc. Archives of Oberlin College. Several other passages of the pamphlet check approximately with other original sources.

pamphlet would be sure to have a wide circulation. In many a town dog-eared copies were passed on with cynical chuckling from hand to hand, and those who read related the gist of it (perhaps slightly elaborated) to their friends at the corner store. Probably as many people in the late thirties and early forties knew Oberlin through Delazon Smith's pamphlet as knew it through the *Evangelist*. The editor of the *Ashtabula Sentinel* read it and concluded therefore that Oberlin "should be discountenanced and frowned upon by every virtuous citizen and lover of decency and good order."[37] The *Boston Investigator* accepted it as "another proof that the greatest seeming piety is no guarantee whatever against the greatest scenes of depravity."[38] When a certain Mr. Blackney was on his way to bring his family to Oberlin to give them an education, a chance acquaintance at Albany who had read *Oberlin Unmasked,* told him "with a solemn countenance" that he was "surprised that [he] should dare to take [his] Daughters to Oberlin," where, he said, "*white* and *Black* Persons walk[ed] arm in arm in the Public Streets" and amalgamation was supported on principle.[39] *Oberlin Unmasked* was the chief source of information of those members of the Ohio legislature who sought repeatedly to repeal the Oberlin charter. It is doubtful whether, without it, these attempts would ever have been made.

Though the later career of Delazon Smith is irrelevant to the story of Oberlin it has too much intrinsic interest to be left out entirely. As so often is the case, the disgraced student turns out to have an outstandingly successful career. Smith studied law in Cleveland for a year and then in 1838 went to Rochester, N. Y., where he edited the *New York Watchman* a "liberal paper" intended to "protect the country vs the blasting power of *Priestcraft, Superstition* and *Error*."[40] He later edited other papers at Rochester and at Dayton, Ohio. In the early forties he served as special United States Commissioner to Ecuador, showing that he had gained some political influence. In 1846 he moved to Iowa where he continued to engage in politics. There he was converted again and devoted part of his time to the Methodist ministry!

[37]Quoted in the *Liberalist,* Sept. 2, 1837.
[38]Quoted in *Ibid.,* Sept. 23, 1837.
[39]W. A. Blackney to Levi Burnell, June 25, 1840 (Treas. Off., File A).
[40]*Cleveland Liberalist,* June 30 [?], 1838.



# OBERLIN UNMASKED:

**BY DELAZON SMITH.**

*For sale at the Office of the Cleveland Liberalist,*

**CLEVELAND, O. 1837.**

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**Price, 37 1-2 Cents per copy.**
**$3,00 per dozen.**

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"WHATEVER CHARITY WE OWE TO MEN'S PERSONS,
WE OWE NONE TO THEIR ERRORS."

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☞ *Postage on each copy 100 miles, 6 cents—over 100 miles 10 cents.*

THE COVER OF DELAZON SMITH'S *HISTORY OF OBERLIN* OR *OBERLIN UNMASKED*

He built up a reputation for "transcendent oratorical powers" and was remembered many years after his departure for Oregon as the "smartest man Oberlin College produced!" It was in 1852 that he joined a caravan bound up the Oregon Trail.[41] In Oregon he edited a paper (the *Oregon Democrat*) for a while. He was elected a member of the legislature and of the constitutional convention of 1857. When Oregon was admitted as a state two years later Joseph Lane and Delazon Smith were elected to the United States Senate. Smith drew the short term and served less than a month. He died in the autumn of 1860.[42] The *Oberlin Evangelist* commented on his death: "It is a somewhat painful comment on the distribution of public honors and trusts, that of more than ten thousand students who have been in attendance here, the least worthy has attained the highest distinction. Our experience in this regard may be singular, but this instance does not stand alone."[43]

* * *

The state of public opinion with regard to abolitionism being what it was during the thirties and forties it was to be expected that attempts would be made to silence the abolitionists at Oberlin as those at Western Reserve, at Lane Seminary and elsewhere had been silenced. Ohio legislators got the hint from a statement published in the *Western Monthly Magazine* at Cincinnati in 1836: "The Abolitionists have had under their control, the Oneida Institute in New York, the Oberlin Institute in Ohio, and the Lane Seminary in Ohio. The latter institution was reformed by the good sense of its trustees; the legislature of New York have taken measures to purify the Oneida Institute from this foul abomination, and it is believed that there now remains but one school in which murder and robbery are openly inculcated as christian virtues."[44]

The Democrats were glad to accept the challenge, for Oberlin was the symbol of all that they abhorred. The Whigs often de-

[41]Letter of E. R. Harlan, Curator of the Historical, Memorial and Art Department of Iowa to "Oberlin College," Des Moines, Aug. 28, 1931, and *Biographical Directory of the American Congress* (Washington—1928). The National Archives reported to the author some dozen or more documents on Smith's Ecuador Mission, dated 1844–46.—P. M. Hamer to the author, Jan. 18, 1940.

[42]Obituary in the *Oregon Democrat*, Nov. 27, 1860, furnished by Miss Nellie Pipes, and *Biographical directory of the United States Congress.*

[43]Dec. 19, 1860.

[44]Vol. V, 224 (Apr., 1836).

fended it but not always with too much enthusiasm. In the period from 1837 to 1843 several bills favorable to Oberlin were defeated and four unsuccessful attempts were made to repeal the charter of the Institute, all because of Oberlin's social radicalism.[45]

There was no debate on the granting of the charter to the Oberlin Institute in 1834, because the community and institution had not yet been converted to abolitionism. But by 1837 the work of Weld, Mahan, and the Lane Rebels had been so thoroughly done that Oberlin was notorious as a "hot bed of abolitionism." Because of this reputation a revision of the charter allowing an increase in the number of trustees from twelve to eighteen was voted down in January of 1837. When, a month later, a bill was introduced for the incorporation of the Sheffield Manual Labor Institute (one of the Oberlin branch schools), the legislators consented to its enactment only after an amendment had been added excluding colored students from the school. At about the same time an incorporation of the town was denied, as one of the senators declared, "because the name was "Oberlin," and that you are considered especially friendly to the blacks."[46] Three times in the early forties, for similar reasons, the legislature refused to incorporate Oberlin literary societies. Some legislators suspected that they were disguised abolition societies. One declared that he "did not want the statute book disgraced with the name of Oberlin. He did not like the knowledge that emanated from that institution. It sent out scholars, who, as school teachers, instilled their abolition doctrines into the minds of our children. . . . They (the students) go about preaching moral reform, and get together congregations, where they compel virtuous women to hear disclosures of the licentious and corrupting practices of eastern cities."[47]

The first attempt to repeal the charter was made in 1840. Evi-

[45]The history of these legislative attacks on Oberlin has been thoroughly studied by Clayton S. Ellsworth in his doctoral dissertation, "Oberlin and the Anti-Slavery Movement, up to the Civil War" (MS in Cornell U. Library), 50–102. His treatment is based chiefly on the House and Senate *Journals,* the *Ohio State Journal and Columbus Gazette,* the *Ohio Statesman* (Columbus), and other political newspapers. The subsequent summary is largely based on Ellsworth's account. See also C. S. Ellsworth, "Ohio's Legislative Attack upon Abolition Schools," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review,* XXI, 379–386.

[46]John W. Allen to Levi Burnell, Mar. 22, 1837 (Treas. Off., File A).

[47]*Philanthropist,* Jan. 21, 1840.

dence of Oberlin's abolition character was furnished by D. L. Parker, one of Delazon Smith's associates, and by other local enemies. A proposal was even considered calling for a legislative investigation by a joint committee of the Senate and the House. The proposition was defeated, however, and the repeal bill postponed. Later in the year, charges were brought forward that the Oberlin agents in England (see the next chapter) had been raising large amounts of money to aid escaping fugitives passing through Oberlin on their way to Canada, and thus the prevailing Anglophia was joined to the pro-slavery bias to make Oberlin an object of detestation. The first Oberlin slave rescue, which took place in the spring of 1841, further strengthened the opposition. In March a second bill for the repeal of the Institute's charter was introduced but was indefinitely postponed by a Whig vote.

Early in 1842 another effort was made following the receipt of two petitions for repeal signed by four hundred citizens of Richland County. The Democratic members of the legislature accepted the cue gratefully and supported another measure for the repeal of the charter of the Institute, which they described as "dangerous to liberty, law and morality, an excrescence upon the body politic."[48] The measure was killed by postponement.

The fourth and last attempt at repeal of the charter (1842–43) came the nearest to success. A test vote in the Senate to lay the measure on the table was carried by a majority of one only. Delazon Smith's pamphlet, *Oberlin Unmasked*, was extensively used to strengthen the Democratic charges and testimonials were introduced in favor of the author's good character and integrity. The Democrats also resorted to the usual vituperation, calling Oberlin "a foul stench in their nostrils," and "banditti . . ., and negro stealers supported by enemies of the country abroad, and emissaries at home."[49]

The abolitionism of the institution did not, of course, constitute legal ground for the repeal of the charter. Probably the Democrats never expected to succeed. But they had very definite political ends in view: (1) The persecution would be popular with the great body of anti-abolitionist voters, and (2) the Whigs would be forced to take a stand for or against Oberlin—if they

[48]Ellsworth, "Oberlin and the Anti-Slavery Movement," 88.
[49]*Ohio Statesman*, Dec. 10, 1842, quoted in Ellsworth, *Op. Cit.*, 91.

voted for, they could be dubbed "abolitionists" by the Democrats, if against, they were likely to lose more supporters to the Liberty Party. These political attacks probably did not do Oberlin a great deal of harm, but they show the extent and character of the popular feeling against the institution.

Extremely harmful, however, to Oberlin were the repercussions from a bizarre incident which took place in 1840. A certain Horace Norton from Ripley, Ohio, a "prep" in his teens, wrote several "obscene letters" to a certain young lady student. The recipient turned the notes over to Alice Welch Cowles, the Female Principal, who gave them to her husband, Professor Henry Cowles, who, in turn, gave them to Timothy B. Hudson, then Professor of Latin and Greek. Later letters were intercepted at the post office by H. C. Taylor, a theological student who was acting postmaster at the time. Finally, in one note, Norton proposed to the girl a clandestine meeting in the woods outside the village. Taylor and several associates arranged that an acceptance in a feminine hand should be returned to the luckless Romeo. At the appointed hour, Norton arrived at the rendezvous to find, not an amorous young lady, but about fifteen wrathful male students, including several from the Theological Department (Taylor among them), headed by Professor Hudson. For a while they "labored with" him in an effort to bring him to repentance. Failing in this, after a short session of prayer, they bared his back, laid him on a log and gave him twenty-five lashes! "The whole operation was most fearfully romantic from beginning to end," wrote a tutor the next morning.

The victim hastened to Wellington, from which point he went home to tell his story to a sympathetic and indignant father. At its next meeting the faculty expelled him for immoral conduct and ordered that his father be notified of their action.[50] The father replied by denouncing the "conspiracy of a most nefarious kind formed against a boy—a friendless youth of 18, by a band of ruffians" and by declaring his intention of "bringing the authors . . . of this wicked and literally *bloody* conspiracy to the bar of human justice—and for the verdict of public opinion."[51] Both of these threats he carried out. Hudson and four theological students confessed publicly before the church to having

[50]F. M., July 28, 1840.
[51]G. Norton to Levi Burnell, Aug. 13, 1840 (Treas. Off., File G).

participated in the affair. Norton sued them for damages, and the trial which followed at Elyria "caused more excitement and agitation than any one which has ever before taken place in Lorain [County]." Many persons from Oberlin, including Finney, himself, were subpoenaed as witnesses. The Nortons won a judgment of $1,500.00, but the case was appealed and the damages reduced to $550.00 by the Supreme Court of Ohio. In a criminal process in which the Oberlinites were charged with "Assault & Battery with clubs, rawhides, teeth, nails, fists, feet & ropes," all were found guilty and fined from fifty to a hundred dollars apiece. "We have never before heard such strange details," wrote the editor of an Elyria paper, "such cold-blooded atrocity, and such shocking impiety drawn out upon any other trial."[52] As to the "verdict of public opinion," the story of the "Oberlin Lynching," in one or other of its many versions, was soon known in every American city and hamlet.

Opinion in Oberlin was sharply divided on the matter. Some of the "lynchers" were locally prominent; four were students in the Theological Course, two of these were also teachers in the Preparatory Department, and Hudson was a popular member of the faculty. One of the literary societies seized the opportunity to debate the question, "Is Lynch law ever justifiable?"[53] The faculty postponed action from meeting to meeting. On September 18, they debated all the afternoon and until nine o'clock in the evening as to whether it was "ever justifiable for individuals, unauthorized by law, to take it upon themselves to inflict punishment." When a vote was taken five out of twelve cast their lot with the affirmative and on the side of the "lynchers": President Mahan, Professors Hudson and Cowles and Tutors James H. Fairchild and C. A. Jenison. Finney, Morgan and Dascomb were among the seven who voted in the negative.[54] After the five students had confessed, a resolution was introduced "to ascertain

[52]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Nov. 10, 1841 and Aug. 17, 1842. The last quotation is from the *Independent Treasury* (Elyria), Aug. 10, 1842, which contains the best account of the affair and the trial. The theological students were H. C. Taylor, James Steele, William Cochran and E. Henry Fairchild. J. H. Fairchild mentions his brother's participation in the Leonard-Fairchild MS, I, 73. See also James Fairchild's letters to Mary Kellogg, July 29 and Oct. 13, 1840, Feb. 8 and Apr. 27, 1841 (Fairchild MSS). Finney described the affair in detail in his MS Memoirs, but this portion was deleted by the editor before publication. The original is in the College Library. See also the *Oberlin Evangelist Extra,* Feb. 24, 1841.

[53]Minutes of the Dialectic Association, Aug. 12, 1840.

[54]F. M., Sept. 18, 1840.

the names of other individuals engaged in the Norton affair." It was passed once but reconsidered and lost.[55] Finally, some two months and a half after the incident, an official statement was approved and published recognizing "that the chastisement of Norton was, under the circumstances, unjustifiable," but adding, that, while the faculty regarded his conduct "as the most deliberate & flagrant wickedness" that of the "lynchers" was only a "mistake."[56] There is no evidence that the men involved were punished in any way by the faculty or trustees. There were some in Oberlin quite evidently who looked upon them as heroes.

Gossips and enemies of Oberlin picked up the story with avidity, and passed it on with the usual elaborations. Threats of "counter-lynching" were not wanting. "We have much trial with the most unhappy *Norton* affair," Shipherd wrote to his brother. "Gog & Magog threaten to reduce Ob[n] to ashes *soon*. Secret meetings are held in adjacent towns for its accomplishment. But the Lord is on our side. What can *man* do to us?"[57]

Friends of Oberlin were greatly troubled both by the facts of the case and by the "hesitancy and heartlessness" of the faculty in their disavowal.[58] Gerrit Smith, the philanthropist and reformer of Peterboro, N. Y. who had recently given twenty thousand acres of land to Oberlin, wrote to Finney in January of 1841:

"What is the truth about the Oberlin Lynching Story? Could I have a brief version of the story from the pen of Brother Mahan or yourself. I should then know just what to say when I hear, that even the Faculty of Oberlin have turned mobocrats. . . .

"It appears to me, that the public mind should without delay be disabused of its false impressions in respect to this unpleasant matter. Until it is, Oberlin will suffer in the esteem of many, who are wise and good . . . All should be done, which can be done within the limits of righteousness, & done very speedily too, to show that Oberlin not only does not countenance the practice of deception & the laying of traps & the perpetuation of mob violence, but that she has not the least patience with such crimes."[59]

[55]F. M., Sept. 24 and Oct. 1, 1840.
[56]F. M., Oct. 8, 1840.
[57]Apr. 16, 1841 (Shipherd-Randolph MSS).
[58]J. B. Walker to Henry Cowles, Mar. 15, 1841 (Cowles-Little MSS). Also T. D. Weld to Whipple, Dec. 1843 (Weld MSS).
[59]Smith to Finney, Jan. 12, 1841 (Gerrit Smith Letter Book, 1827–1843, page 190, in the Gerrit Smith MSS).

When another friend went to the house of an acquaintance to persuade him to subscribe to the *Oberlin Evangelist,* he was informed that his acquaintance did not care to take a paper that came from the place "where the man was whipd."[60]

Sixteen years after the affair took place, the story, in barely recognizable form, was retold by a Kentuckian in a book entitled *Abolition Unveiled.* In this version Horace Norton had become Tom Shaw and his young lady correspondent had developed into a Negro girl called Susa Bean. The student lynchers had become "several of the Professors," who now appeared as defenders of the purity of "a very charming colored young lady" from "the wiles of the depraved and wicked" whites. While one of the "professors" lays "on the rod with mathemathetical precision" another prays for Tom Shaw's soul. The victim is made to exclaim: "Away with such cruel treachery. Tell me no more about human perfection—the equality of races—the elysium you intended to make Oberlin: if it's not a hell on earth, I am mistaken."[61] *Forty* years afterward, the student paper at Cornell University printed another garbled version![62]

Following close upon the heels of this scandal came another, an even more unfortunate affair. Horace Taylor was one of the confessed lynchers. In 1836 he came to Oberlin from Western Reserve College where he had been the leader among the students in anti-slavery and moral reform and the valedictorian of his class. At the time of the whipping he was a theological student and a few weeks later he graduated, delivering a commencement oration on the "Validity of Civil Government!" Soon after, he was appointed a member of the Prudential Committee and became editor of the *Oberlin Evangelist,* in the columns of which journal he continued enthusiastically to further the cause of reform in sexual morals. Later he was elected to the Board of Trustees. Suddenly, in December of 1843, the *Evangelist* shocked its readers by the announcement that the *late* editor had confessed to and "is proved guilty of the following crimes:

[60]Bradford King to Finney, Mar. 28, 1840 (Treas. Off., File E). One of the participants, H. C. Taylor, was dismissed from presbytery. — R. B. Moore, *History of Huron Presbytery* (Philadelphia—1892), 107–109.

[61]Henry Field James, *Abolitionism Unveiled; or, Its Origin, Progress, and Pernicious Tendency Fully Developed* (Cincinnati—1856), 187–195.

[62]*Cornell Era* quoted in *Oberlin Review,* VIII, 106 (Jan. 22, 1881).

> 1. Of purloining money during the past two years, from the Ev. office, and of embezzling funds sent by mail from subscribers.
>
> 2. Of pilfering, for more than a year past, from the money drawer of the Post Office, to which he has had access.
>
> 3. Of seduction, under aggravated circumstances. Subsequent to the death of his wife, some eighteen months since, he took into his family a young woman of unblemished character, to manage his concerns. This woman he seduced. To prevent detection, he advised, and concerted with success, the requisite measures to secure abortion.[63]

The heavens were falling!

No crueler blow was ever struck against Oberlin. Taylor, editor of the *Oberlin Evangelist*—organ of perfectionism, "acknowledged *Leader* of Moral Reform efforts at the West," "perhaps more than any one else in the North of Ohio Leader of the Liberty Party," Oberlin trustee, member of the Prudential Committee, acting postmaster at Oberlin;—this man was a thief, an adulterer, and a dastardly hypocrite![64] Finney, who was then in Boston, received a letter from his younger daughter:

> My dear Father,—I will write a few lines, dear father . . . Mr. [Taylor] is a thief! . . . We suppose him one of the most wicked men in [Oberlin]. Oh! I would not be a wicked thief like him . . . I feel very sad, dear father . . . What shall I do? Your own dear friend is a villain! I feel as if I should cry every minute, . . . Oh, father, I hope you will not be such a thief![65]

Taylor was immediately excommunicated from the church and, soon after, his name was stricken from the rolls of the Lorain County Association. On February 15, 1844, he was sentenced to one year in the county jail, and two hundred and seventy-five dollars fine. (This was his second sentence in two years!) January 18 was set aside by the Oberlin church as a special day of fasting,

[63]Statement signed by A. Mahan, H. Cowles, J. A. Thome and G. Whipple in the *Oberlin Evangelist,* Dec. 20, 1843.

[64]Theodore Weld to Geo. Whipple, Dec., 1843 (Weld MSS).

[65]G. F. Wright, *Charles Grandison Finney* (New York—1893), 286.

prayer and humiliation. At the next regular meeting of the trustees Taylor's resignation was received and accepted.[66]

Oberlin's friends abroad were equally cast down. Sherlock Bristol, then acting as financial agent, wrote to Secretary Hamilton Hill from Rochester:

"I have today recd your last, dated on the 8th inst., containing the *mournful, distressing, disheartening* intelligence of the fall of our bro. *Taylor.* Oh! My brother! My heart is overwhelmed with an *ocean* of sorrow; Sorrows of my *own,* & sorrows I feel in sympathy with my brethren who love the cause of holiness, and the readers of the Evangelist scattered over the land. As if a mountain fell—& drew my soul into the deepest depths of sorrow, & bound it there. I feel the *dreadful stroke* . . . Bro. Taylor! *dishonest!* nay, a *thief!* purloining in Oberlin! purloining from the money of the Lord! My heart throbs & swells in rebellion against the sacrilege, & I cry out It *cannot,* it *cannot* be. The Editor of the *Evangelist!* The preacher of the doctrine of *Entire Sanctification,* & of the way in which it is to be attained, living among the precious revivals of Oberlin, beneath the very wings of the Cherubim, perpetrate this deed—not under the influence of *poison,* . . . but *deliberately*—in *cool calculation,* reenacting the deed from day to day! Oh! bro. Taylor, Son of the Morning! how art thou fallen from heaven! How has the gold become dim & the fine gold cloyed! Bro. Taylor fallen—Would God I had *died* for him! I speak it deliberately. Would God the midnight assassin, had taken my life, than that thou hadst fallen! Rather would I have heard, that my wife & dear little son had been laid side by side in the grave, than that that deed had been done. For then had they rested in peace—& the cause of holiness had moved on! But now, how shall the lips of slanderers be filled, & the enemy triumph! . . . I have just read carefully your letter again, & am the more astonished still. I find that *one word* partially obliterated by the seal I entirely *misread.* It was the word *'Seduction!'* I certainly *misread it* at first. Until this second or third reading, I did not suppose he was guilty of any crime but stealing. And *is it, can it* be true? Tell it not in Gath. Publish it not in Askelon. Ah! but *it will be published* in Askelon & told on the housetops in Gath! & the daughters of the Philistines will re-

[66]MS Records of the Oberlin Church, Dec., 1843; *Oberlin Evangelist,* Jan. 3. and Feb. 28, 1844, and T. M., Aug. 27, 1844.

joice. . . ."[67] "Our heads are in the dust!", wrote Weld. "But God reigns and Hell's gates shall not prevail."[68] "The dreadful intelligence from Oberlin," Tappan wrote to Finney, "is very afflictive, but we must not lose any confidence in God. He is the same now & forever, blessed be His name."[69]

In the minds of a great proportion of Americans Oberlin was a name for everything that was dangerous and vicious. Oberlin was known to most people as the home of racial amalgamation, unchristian heresy, inadequate scholarship, wholesale immorality, mob violence, and disgusting hypocrisy. Oberlin was by many believed to be "a kind of *Sewer* into which all the filth & froth gathers of all *sorts* & *colours*."[70]

[67]Sherlock Bristol to Hamilton Hill *et al.* Dec. 14, 1843 (Treas. Off., File K).
[68]Weld to Whipple, Dec., 1843 (Copy in Weld MSS).
[69]Lewis Tappan to Finney, Dec. 19, 1843 (Lewis Tappan letter books). It is a fact difficult to explain that Taylor later returned to Oberlin, was again received into the church and played an active part in that organization for several years longer. He was eventually detected in another fraud and left Oberlin. See T. M., Aug. 18, 1865; MS Records of the Oberlin Church, *passim*, and P. C. M., Apr. 12, 1864. After the Civil War he appears to have become a carpet-bagger. In 1872 he was postmaster at Corpus Christi, Texas.—Taylor to J. D. Cox, Apr. 10, 1872 (J. D. Cox MSS).
[70]J. L. Hudson to Levi Burnell, Dec. 28, 1838 (Treas. Off., File D). See similar opinion expressed in L. Mills to Burnell, Dec. 7, 1838 (Treas. Off., File F).

## CHAPTER XXIX

# *OBERLINIZING ENGLAND*

OBERLIN'S unsavory reputation in many quarters greatly complicated the financial problem. When one agent applied to a certain minister for aid for Oberlin, the latter replied that "he was very glad to hear that the Institution was in want of funds to carry on their operations. He hoped they always would be."[1] A year later (in 1837) a correspondent wrote to the *Cleveland Liberalist:* " . . . The Oberlin Institute is hard pushed—and unless they can make a *raise* they must stop payment, and the *dear* youth that are now taking their comfort . . . (poor souls) will have to go to work and honestly earn their *own* victuals."[2] As donations secured by solicitors constituted the only source of revenue outside of the small payments by students, the attitude of the public was a very important factor. Fortunately, Oberlin's strong stand on religious and moral questions produced firm friends as well as inveterate foes. Oberlin's chief financial support came from the abolitionists. It would have died an early death without their aid. The most successful appeals for funds were made on the ground that money contributed to Oberlin would help directly in raising the Negro out of the mire of slavery.

Oberlin depended for financial support in 1835 almost solely on Arthur and Lewis Tappan and their benevolent friends in New York. The misfortunes of the Tappans were therefore, likewise, the misfortunes of Oberlin. In the summer of 1835 there was a great outburst of resentment against abolitionists all over the Union. In Charleston, South Carolina, a mob seized all anti-slavery propaganda found in the post office and burned it in the street, together with effigies of Dr. Samuel H. Cox, William Lloyd Garrison and Arthur Tappan. Mobs broke up anti-slavery meetings in Utica and in Boston. All sorts of threats were made against

[1]Alice Cowles to Zilpah Grant [and H. Cowles], Jan. 16, 1836 (Cowles MSS).
[2]June 24, 1837.

Arthur Tappan. It was said that a purse of $20,000 had been taken up in New Orleans as a reward for anyone who should successfully kidnap him and take him south. To protect him against an attempt to claim this reward the Mayor of New York spent one whole night pacing up and down in front of the Tappan residence![3] "The Lord has hitherto preserved me . . . from the hand of the assassins . . .," Arthur Tappan wrote to Shipherd in September, "and we begin to feel that the danger is passing over." "The drafts you speak of as *to be* drawn will be duly honored if my life is spared. If I had foreseen the storm that has gathered around my head I should not have dared to assume the responsibilities I did for your Institution."[4] Then in December came a disastrous fire which destroyed some fifty acres of buildings in the heart of New York City, including the Tappan store. Much of his goods was rescued by Negroes and other friends, and the construction of another store was immediately begun. The loss, however, was very large.[5]

All money received by the Institute in the great year of 1835 was immediately expended for salaries, buildings or supplies. The cash balance on February 8, 1836, was $2.68. Notes totalling ten thousand dollars due in October, 1836, 1837, and 1838, were held against the Institute by Arthur Tappan as security for his loan of October, 1835.[6] The financial future was built on hopes—hopes that Tappan would be prosperous and could be persuaded to cancel these obligations with more subscriptions, and that other rich men of liberal views, like Gerrit Smith, would also give large sums. Salaries were to be paid out of the receipts from the Oberlin Professorship Association. Payments by the association had already fallen behind in February of 1836 and the treasurer of the association had paid to the professors some three hundred dollars more for salaries than he had collected from the subscribers.[7]

In an effort to put the finances of the school on a firmer basis several agents went out to secure money for running expenses

[3]*Life of Arthur Tappan* (New York—1870), 243–252, and Lewis Tappan to J. J. Shipherd, Aug. 19, 1835 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

[4]Arthur Tappan to Shipherd, Sept. 16, 1835 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

[5]*Life of Arthur Tappan*, 272 *et seq.*

[6]Oberlin College Treasurer, MS Report, Feb. 9, 1836 (Misc. Archives).

[7]"Prof. Fund Instalments, 1836" (Apr. 20), and "Oberlin Collegiate Institute in a/c with R. Leavitt, Treasurer of the Professorship Fund at N. York," Apr. 22, 1836 (Misc. Archives).

and to attempt the collection of $100,000 for an endowment. Among the number were H. B. Clarke, Henry Cowles, George Whipple, John Keep and John J. Shipherd, himself. Clarke, in three months, secured two hundred-dollar subscriptions and collected $325.00 cash at a cost to the Institute of $150.00. Professor Cowles undertook three different agencies in the winter of 1835-36. On a visit to New York and New England in February his expenses nearly equalled his cash collections. Both Cowles and Whipple found it next to impossible to get anything in New York because of the great losses resulting from the fire. Whipple's mission was almost a total failure.[8]

The situation became increasingly critical as money became tighter in New York, and Lewis Tappan refused to make any further payments to the Oberlin Professorship Association—because, he said, "Finney is not an Abolitionist."[9] In April, 1836, a new debt of $1500.00 was incurred by the purchase of some forty thousand mulberry trees for the ill-fated silk enterprise. To meet the crisis, Shipherd went to New York to secure a loan or raise further subscriptions. "I pray God to help me, a worm," he wrote back to Oberlin on his arrival in the Metropolis, "with a mouth & wisdom which none can gainsay nor resist, that I may obtain relief for Christ's suffering cause at Oberlin." He needed divine aid, for the situation in New York seemed almost hopeless. No loans were to be had for less than 25% to 30% interest per year. He found Oberlin's New York patrons scarcely able to "live under their pressure" and absolutely unable either to give or pledge any large amounts. Payments to the Professorship Fund were falling behind rapidly. Still he had hope that Arthur Tappan would again come to the rescue.[10]

Keep arrived in New York early in June and at the end of the month he had not yet collected enough to pay for his board. Not only was money exceedingly scarce, but he found seven or eight agents of other colleges and seminaries also pestering the much harrassed philanthropists of the city. He did persuade Tappan to cancel two thousand of the ten thousand dollar debt and to promise ten thousand more, if the agents of the Institute could

[8]"H. B. Clarke's Report," Mar. 29, 1836; Cowles' reports: Feb. 26 and Mar. 9, 1836; "Geo. Whipple Report, June 1836" (Misc. Archives).
[9]Shipherd to Burnell, May 9, 1836 (Treas. Off., File H).
[10]Shipherd to Burnell, Apr. 26, and May 9, 1836 (File H).

raise a hundred thousand in all before January 1, 1837! Keep recognized that this condition was not likely to be fulfilled, but concluded that there was nothing to do but try—or give up the rosy hopes for Oberlin's future. Of course, he tried. This was, he felt, the last desperate effort. "If these men cannot be induced to come up to our help & actually *give* what is needed to insure success to Oberlin, she must dismiss her many scholars, & creep along till by the silk operation or in some other way she can *grow bigger.*"[11]

In this summer of 1836 the students and teachers at Oberlin were feeling the pinch of poverty as never before. In June the students were officially informed that they must pay up their debts and meet future bills promptly if the Institute was to continue to "conduct its operations upon correct Christian principles."[12] It was necessary to reduce the food furnished in the boarding hall to a starvation level. In September it was down to bread and salt and, finally, from the sheer inability of the Institute to secure any more supplies, the management of the commons was turned over to a committee of students and faculty.[13] Oberlin was precious close to dissolution. It was in the nick of time that Shipherd, on another mission to New York in October, secured five thousand dollars from I. M. Dimond, the Yankee jeweler, Finneyite and subscriber to the Professorship Association. Three thousand was used to pay pressing debts and two thousand dollars was sent back to relieve the situation on the spot. Oberlin was saved again, though it was found quite impossible to raise the $100,000 endowment and thus secure the new Tappan gift. "Come then magnify the Lord with me," wrote the Founder, "& let us exalt his name together. To Him let us, joined by our loved associates, consecrate Oberlin anew & walk softly before him forever, fearing not what men can do unto us."[14]

It was well that this temporary relief came when it did, for what had been a tightness of credit in 1836 became the Panic of 1837. The letters of Oberlin's friends and agents are full of it. Early in April banks in northern Ohio were refusing to do any-

[11]Keep to the Faculty, July 1, and to Burnell, July 20, 1836 (Treas. Off., File E).

[12]"Notice to Students, June 16, 1836 re Tuition Bills" (Misc. Archives).

[13]See pages 608–609 below.

[14]Shipherd to Burnell, "Stm. Bt. Weatherbound near West Point, Oct. 12, 1836" (Treas. Off., File H).

thing except receive. "I do not know what farther to say," wrote a "brother" from Maumee on April 11, "the *wheels* are all fast."[15] Later in the same month William Dawes found "panick" in New York. "Over this place there hangs a pall of mourning—yes—deep depicted mourning. Men who a few months since could confidently boast of their thousands and hundreds of thousands, are now pennyless. . . . Their sin has truly found them out . . . and those who worshipped Mammon—*mourn*—mourn that their God has vanished."[16] "O tempora; O Mores!" wrote another agent from up state New York. "A dreadful panic has seized the nation. Order has become confusion. Tranquility is changed into the wildest frenzy & the hearts of men are fainting for fear. Paper is almost worthless. I found myself unable to get a seat in the stage from Syracuse to Madison altho' I had as current paper money as the nation affords. The Stage Agent said it would not buy oats for their horses . . . Many a gentleman has been unable to get a meal of victuals for want of 'chink' in the city. . . . Banks have refused to redeem their Bills. Mobs have been resorted to, to compel them to do it. . . . The pressure is immense. Famine stares thousands & thousands in the face."[17] By summer the banks and other large business concerns all over the nation had suspended specie payment. The wheels of industry stopped; trade other than barter practically ceased. Arthur Tappan made a personal appeal for help to Nicholas Biddle of the Bank of the United States of Pennsylvania but, receiving no aid, was also forced to suspend.[18]

The sources of financial aid for the Oberlin enterprise were largely dried up. Tappan could do nothing for it and keep faith with his creditors. The subscribers to the professorship fund resolved that the Oberlin Institute "was worthy of being sustained," regretted their inability to pay in full, and recommended that subscribers pay twenty percent on their pledges.[19] Other subscribers likewise defaulted. Joshua Giddings wrote to the Treasurer early in 1838: "I regret to say that I am wholly

[15]Levi Beebee to Burnell, Apr. 11, 1837 (Treas. Off., File A).
[16]William Dawes to Burnell, Apr. 24 and 27, 1837 (Treas. Off., File B).
[17]O. D. Hibbard to Burnell, May, 1837 (Treas. Off., File D).
[18]*Life of Arthur Tappan,* 280–281, and L. A. Spalding to Levi Burnell, May 9, 1837 (Treas. Off., File I).
[19]Alfred Smith to Levi Burnell, May 12, 1837 (Treas. Off., File I), and J. J. Shipherd to Burnell, Feb. 24, 1838 (File H).

*unable* to meet my subscription to the Oberlin Institute. The unparalleled pressure in money matters has put it beyond my power to command funds to the amount due that Institution. Nor from present appearances can I give any encouragement that I shall be able to meet it at least for some time to come."[20] Oberlin's creditors in the meantime continued to press for payments and threatened to bring legal action for recovery. "The very utmost that can be done is to keep in us the breath of life," declared Father Keep.[21]

There was practically no improvement in the years immediately following. Gifts of goods of various sorts were secured, but money was not to be had. There is a pitiful similarity in the reports of two agents: one writing from the Western Reserve and one from the city of Rochester. "You can form no idea of the poverty in the country," wrote the former. "But few farmers have raised enough for their own consumption. . . . Under these circumstances they do not feel called upon to aid." The agent in Rochester wrote: "You can form but little idea of the scarcity of money here. . . . There is but little money to be had here except the Corporation 'Shinplasters.' I suppose that no time ever was when it was so difficult to raise money as the present."[22] By 1839 Oberlin was almost starved out. In July Shipherd wrote to the Treasurer begging for ten dollars to pay for flour. The faculty felt impelled to present to the trustees "a frank, full statement of the character and condition of the Institution." "During almost two years past," they complained, "our regular supplies have been cut off and we have received only scanty remittances."[23]

In desperation Oberlin turned for financial aid to England. In England a successful campaign had been waged against the slave trade and slavery in the British Empire and the victors were ready to invade the foreign field. In 1807 William Wilberforce, ably assisted by Granville Sharpe and the Quaker Thomas Clarkson, had secured an Act of Parliament prohibiting the slave trade. Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton succeeded Wilberforce as the leader

[20]Giddings to Burnell, Jan. 19, 1838 (Treas. Off., File C).

[21]Leavitt, Lord & Co., to Burnell, June 1, and Keep to Burnell, June [?], and Jan. 10, 1837 (File E).

[22]L. W. Hamlin to Burnell, Dec. 13, 1838, and E. P. Ingersoll to Burnell, June 20, 1839 (File D).

[23]Shipherd to Burnell, July 16, 1839 (File H), and "To the Trustees, patrons & friends of the Oberlin Institute" 1839 (Misc. Archives).

in the battle to emancipate the slaves on the West India sugar plantations. It was Buxton who founded the anti-slavery society at London in 1823, the prototype of societies in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, Manchester and other British cities. Wilberforce and Buxton were supported by a distinguished group of reformers: Thomas Clarkson, Joseph and Samuel Gurney, the philanthropic London bankers—the "Tappans" of England, George Thompson, whose visit to Boston had involved Garrison in so much trouble, and Joseph and Thomas Sturge, benevolent Quakers. In 1833, the very year of the death of Wilberforce, an act was passed by Parliament providing for the emancipation of the slaves in the West Indies on August 1, 1834. Naturally the British reformers turned their eyes next to the United States, where millions of black men were still in slavery. The British *and Foreign* Anti-Slavery Society founded in London by Joseph Sturge in April, 1839, was especially aimed at foreign (*i.e.* American) slavery.[24]

Oberlin had been supported since 1835 almost exclusively by the philanthropic friends of the slave. If money was no longer to be had in America, how natural to turn to the friends of human rights in England, especially as many of them, particularly among the Quakers, were persons of some property. Englishmen might doubt the propriety of giving money directly to American anti-slavery societies. Would they not feel that it was more tactful and less an interference with the internal affairs of a friendly nation if they were to make their donations to an abolitionist educational institution like Oberlin and thus indirectly help the oppressed?[25] As early as 1836 Professor John P. Cowles had been delegated by the Board of Trustees to attempt to negotiate a loan in England.[26] Nothing came of this. In 1938, however, as the financial situation grew gloomier and gloomier, discussion of an English mission was revived. In March, 1839, the trustees definitely commissioned William Dawes, "a man of singular piety, tact and address, though his education is rather limited," to undertake to lead the mission.[27]

[24]H. B. Stanton, *Sketches of Reforms and Reformers of Great Britain and Ireland* (New York—1850), 213–226; W. P. Garrison, *William Lloyd Garrison* (New York—1885), II, 352, and D. N. D.

[25]Keep to Burnell, Jan. 11, 1839 (Treas. Off., File E).

[26]T. M., Sept. 13, 1836.

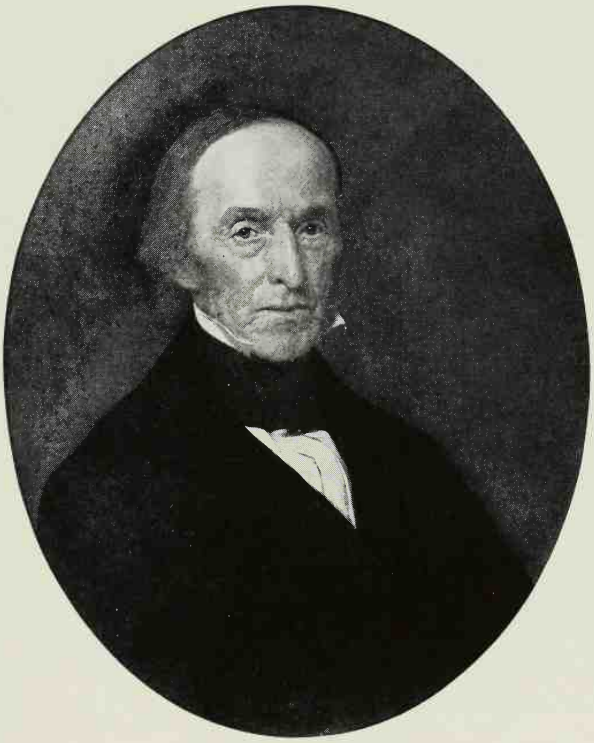
[27]T. M., Mar. 14 and 15, 1839, and John Morgan to Gerrit Smith, Jan. 4, 1839 (Gerrit Smith MSS).

Weld was the unanimous first choice for agent. Mahan and Dawes joined in begging him to accept the commission.[28] But the state of his health prohibited any such heavy labor. Finney and James A. Thome were also talked of, but finally Dawes, who had already established a considerable reputation as a successful mendicant, and "Father" John Keep, "a dear man" Gerrit Smith called him, were selected. Weld did contribute, however, by drawing up a circular presenting the cause of Oberlin, which was subscribed to by the outstanding American anti-slavery advocates: the Tappans, Garrison, Birney, Whittier, Gerrit Smith, Joshua Leavitt, Wendell Phillips, Joshua Giddings, Samuel J. May, Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld, Sarah Grimké and others. In this circular Oberlin was described as "the great nursery of teachers for the coloured people in the United States and Canada," "an admirable school for the training of anti-slavery lecturers and preachers," and the only school "in the United States in which the black and coloured student finds a home, where he is fully and joyfully regarded as a man and a brother."[29] The soft pedal was put on Oberlin's peculiar theology and on any sectarianism. The whole basis of the appeal for sympathy and financial aid was to be the anti-slavery character of the institution.

Fortified with this circular, personal letters of introduction to prominent English reformers, "nearly all of the prominent anti-slavery works," a life preserver apiece and morphine-and-lemon drops against seasickness, Keep and Dawes embarked from the Battery at New York on the sailing packet, *Gladiator* (Captain

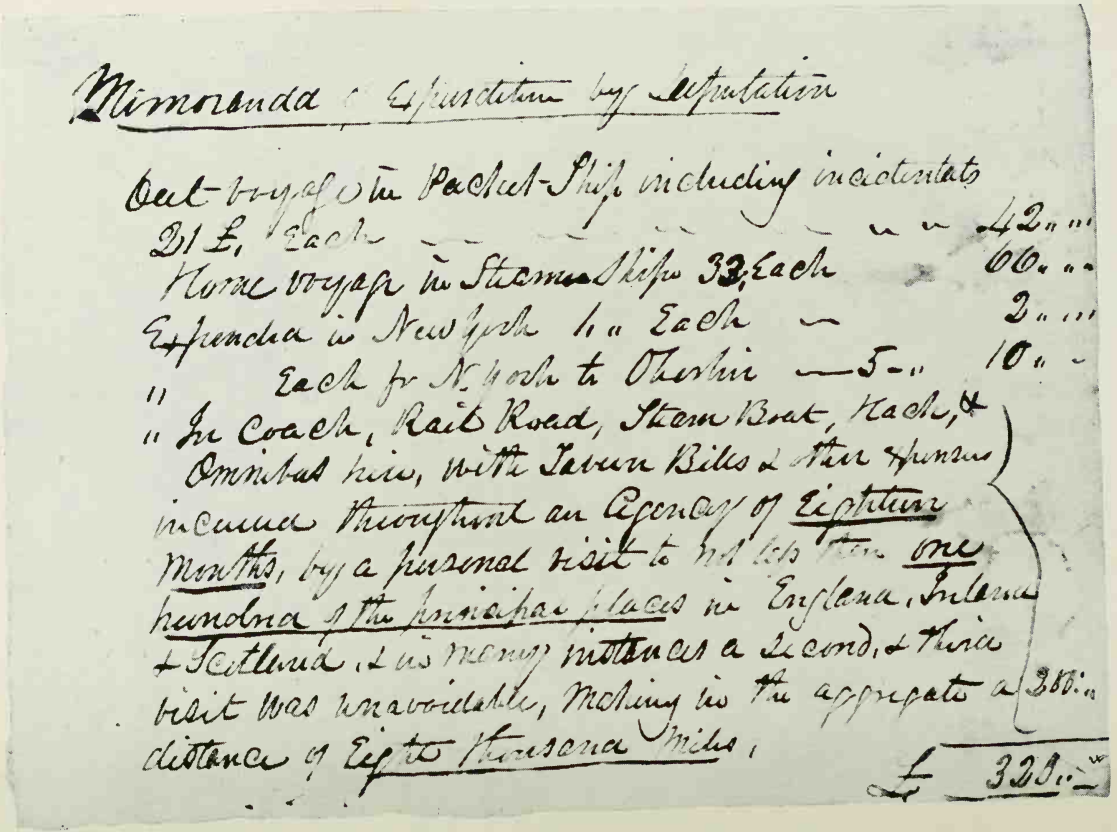
[28]Mahan and Dawes to Weld, Nov. 10, 1838 (Weld MSS). See also Thome to Weld, Nov. 10, 1838, Barnes and Dumond, *Op. Cit.*, II, 711–714.

[29]There is a copy of the circular inscribed on parchment in the Miscellaneous Manuscripts in the Oberlin College Library. It was printed as a three-page pamphlet entitled *An Appeal on Behalf of the Oberlin Institute, in Aid of the Abolition of Slavery in the United States of America* (copy in the Keep MSS), and in Harriet Martineau, *Martyr Age of the United States of America* (New Castle-upon-Tyne—1840). It is not included in the edition of the *Martyr Age* reprinted in New York in 1839 from the original article of that title published in the *London and Westminster Review* in Dec., 1838. As to Weld's authorship, see Morgan to Smith, Jan. 4, 1839 (Gerrit Smith MSS). However, the draft in Angelina Weld's hand with Weld's correction published by Barnes and Dumond in *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld . . .* (New York—c. 1934), I, 741–744, shows only occasional similarities to the official version. The latter is much "toned down" from Weld's uncompromising statement and much of it entirely rewritten—either by Weld at some later date or, as one suspects, by another editor—Keep or Dawes, perhaps. There is another variation of the *Appeal* in manuscript in a Keep-Dawes subscription book preserved in the college archives.



JOHN KEEP

Done by Alonzo Pease for the "Oberlin Choir" in 1859. It now hangs in the reading room of the Oberlin College Library.



Memoranda of Expenditure by Deputation

Out-voyage in Packet-Ship including incidentals
21 £, Each — — — — — — 42 " "
Home voyage in Steam Ships 33, Each 66 " "
Expended in New York 1 " Each — 2 " "
" Each for N. York to Oberlin — 5 " 10 " "
" In Coach, Rail Road, Steam Boat, Hack, & Omnibus hire, with Tavern Bills & other expenses incurred throughout an Agency of Eighteen Months, by a personal visit to not less than one hundred of the principal places in England, Ireland & Scotland, & in many instances a second, & third visit was unavoidable, making in the aggregate a distance of Eight thousand Miles, 200 " "

£ 320 " "

MEMORANDA OF THE EXPENSES OF THE KEEP-DAWES MISSION IN DAWES' HANDWRITING
(Miscellaneous Archives)

Thomas Button), May 20, 1839. Regular commercial sailings of passenger steamships had begun the year before. On May 18, two days before the sailing of the *Gladiator,* Daniel Webster and his party embarked from New York for England on the steamship, *Liverpool,* one of the first passenger steamers. The Oberlin agents preferred the sailing ship because the charges were a third less and because liquors were not included in those charges, this despite the fact that the *Liverpool* would take about a week less in the passage.[30]

The voyage occupied three weeks and, to the Oberlin agents, seemed rough enough. "When the Breese is 'stiff'; & at all a side wind the vessel rolls upon its side, & the floor is slant at an angle of 25 & often 35 & 40 degrees—& rocks from side to side—rises *up,* as if you were not to descend again—& then pitches down, as if to go to the bottom—& another wave takes it, & with all its bulk it is tossed like a cork." On one occasion a real gale blew up. "To us, unaccustomed to the ocean it was terrific as well as sublime," wrote Keep. "The high rolling waves, constantly breaking at top in a white foam—*apparently ready & determined to devour our Ship.* . . . Occasionally the rolling wave poured its torrent over the sides of the Ship. Br. Dawes & myself stood side by side, & enjoyed the scene—conscious of the power & goodness of God . . . connecting with the scene *Wives* & Children, & Home & friends—the Beloved Institution for which we stand & ride on the Bosom of the Deep, & hope & pray & expect great things." Truly these returning Puritans saw the hand of the Lord as clearly in the sea and in the storm as did their physical, spiritual and moral ancestors two centuries before. The pitching of the ship and the "constantly bad smell of the bilge water" had its inevitable effect. Father Keep's illness was mercifully brief, but Dawes suffered much the whole way. Keep was able to eat heartily of fish, and mush, molasses and milk (for there was a

[30]John Keep to Lydia Keep, May 18, 1839 (Keep MSS). Late in the following year Keep and Dawes recrossed the Atlantic on a steamer. See Frank C. Bowen, *A Century of Atlantic Travel, 1830–1930* (Boston—1930), 20 and 34–35, and, especially, on the *Gladiator,* Richard G. Albion, *Square-Riggers on Schedule* (Princeton—1938), 332. The *Gladiator* was a Red Swallowtail Line packet of 649 tons, 137 ft. 6 in. long. As winds and current aided sailing vessels going east and hindered those going west it was common for travelers to sail to England and return to America by steam. See Albion's account of the experiences of passengers on board such ships (*Op. Cit;* 229–252). The receipt for custom house charges paid by Dawes at Tillbury Docks (June 13, 1839) is preserved in the Miscellaneous Archives.

cow on board), and slept well. Dawes was so weak from lack of nourishment that, at the end of the voyage, he was barely able to keep up and about. "But he is cheerful, & calm, & strong & unwavering," wrote his companion, "& when he has been retching severely, he has sweetly said, 'It is all right—I am happy, Brother.' "

As the Lord was seen in the waves and wind so the Devil was found on board. The passengers included several slaveholders, besides "Gamblers, Wine Bibbers, Epicures—utterly averse to religious conversation." There were three ministers among the passengers besides Mr. Keep, but even these were cause of anguish to the pious Oberlinites. One was a Roman Catholic and another was "among the chiefest in the use of his knife & fork at table & in his devotion to the brandy & wine bottle, segars, checkers & chess & facetious anecdote—& apologies for Slaveholders." Services, however, were held on the Sabbath, and, once, Father Keep, with the ship rolling heavily, discoursed to those able to leave their berths on the Providence of God. Always their minds were on the great enterprise before them, and, when they spoke of Paul's voyage and shipwreck, Father Keep felt unable to answer the question put to him by Mr. Dawes: "Were the Apostles sent out on a more important Mission than ours?"[31]

To supplement the recommendations already secured, committees of students were formed which prepared letters directed to Keep and Dawes, expressing their "views respecting the department with which it is our privilege to be connected." The committee from the Theological Department included H. C. Taylor and Michael Strieby. "This Institution is very dear to our hearts . . .," they declared. "It is dear to us because it is located in the great 'Mississippi Valley,' which is destined to receive & sustain a vast population, & to become, ere long, the seat of power & influence of this country." "We can say unhesitatingly, we love Oberlin," wrote the committee from the College, "that we prefer it to any other institution with which we are acquainted." The young ladies' committee, headed by Mary Ann Adams, in its letter described in some detail the system of instruction and government for females and told how "Young Ladies from N[ew] E[ngland], N[ew] Y[ork] & Ohio bent hither their foot-

[31]John Keep to Theodore Keep, On board the *Gladiator,* June 1, to 10, 1839 (Keep MSS).

steps ardently panting for knowledge & improvement."[32] The names of the prominent British reformers who subscribed at an early date and recommended the cause of Oberlin were published and used as an aid in extending the work. The list was headed by Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton and included the Gurneys, Joseph and Thomas Sturge and George Thompson, who had previously made a contribution to Oberlin when in Boston in 1835. The introduction to Harriet Martineau's *Martyr Age of the United States of America,* 4,000 copies of which were reprinted for the Newcastle-Upon-Tyne Emancipation and Aborigines Protection Society, included, in addition, the entire letter of recommendation from the aged and revered Clarkson.

Of course, Keep and Dawes did not consider themselves as merely collectors of money. They believed that they were truly missionaries dropping the first seed, "as the incipient step towards *Oberlinizing England.*" "In all your prayers," begged Keep, "do not fail to ask that, while our Mission may result in good to O[berlin], it may also do good to England."[33] In the work of Oberlinizing England much dependence was put on the *Oberlin Evangelist,* and several copies of each issue were generally sent to the British agents for distribution. Finney's *Lectures on Revivals* was also a powerful piece of propaganda. Between four and five thousand copies of the English edition of this work, published in August of 1840, were sold in England within a little over six months. Many friends were won for Oberlin and its agents by Finney Revivalism. Among them were Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton Hill, who furnished free room and board to Mr. Dawes and Mr. Keep at their London boarding house. Mahan's *Perfectionism* was also read but was considered more controversial.[34] Of course, Father Keep was often called upon to give advice on starting and managing revivals and also to preach in various pulpits, including that in Bishopsgate Chapel once occupied by Dr. Watts. Though Keep was a fundamentally modest man he seems to have believed that he had prepared the way for Oberlin's great work in the

[32]Hiram Elmore *et al.* to Keep and Dawes, May 11, 1839 (Treas. Off., File I); William Cochran *et al.* to Keep and Dawes, May 13, 1839 (Treas. Off., File G); Mary Ann Adams *et al.* to Keep and Dawes, July 10, 1839 (Keep MSS).

[33]Keep to Theodore Keep, June 1 to 10, 1839 (Keep MSS).

[34]Keep to Theodore Keep, Aug. 5, 1839, and Keep to Lydia Keep, Feb. 27, 1840 (Keep MSS). Also Anna (Mrs. Hamilton) Hill to Mrs. C. G. Finney, Aug. 24, 1840 (Finney MSS). This letter tells how the Hills became acquainted with Dawes and Keep.

Mother Country; which he conceived to be "in the providence of God to effect a great, universal & permanent change in the religious state of Great Britain."[35]

Of course, the friends made for Oberlin by Keep's preaching and Finney's writings often gave tangible evidence of their friendship, but the great share of the money obtained was secured through another approach. After all, Keep was most welcome in the pulpits of the Independents (the Congregationalists of England) and they, being of the poorer class, had little to give. Revivalism did not appeal to the Quakers, and they were distinctly not interested in educating ministers! Some success was had with Evangelicals in the Church of England, but High Churchmen, Methodists and Baptists were cold.

The great bulk of the contributions came from the friends of the slave, many of whom, and those best able to contribute, were Quakers. The appeal made by Keep and Dawes for funds was almost always on the ground that the best way to destroy slavery in America was to help the Oberlin Institute. In Oberlin, wrote the committee of theological students, "the despised Colored man finds a home & a welcome to any standing to which his character may entitle him." "We have been in the hottest of the anti-slavery contest," added the college students. "And this we deem the glory of the Institution, that the poor here meet a hearty welcome, and the wronged African, denied admission elsewhere except on most degrading terms." It was the anti-slavery plea which was so effectively presented in a hundred and more towns of Great Britain and Ireland, at the meetings of the anti-slavery societies of Newcastle, of Birmingham, of Glasgow and at the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London in June, 1840. It was the anti-slavery plea that brought the London County Council within three votes of appropriating £200 to Oberlin. It was the anti-slavery argument that accounted for most of $30,000 collected.

The picture of the United States presented was of a nation completely dominated by slavery, where none cared or dared speak up for the oppressed, where all free discussion of the subject was prohibited, where clergymen and statesmen were involved in an infamous conspiracy to continue the system, where

[35]Keep to Henry Cowles, Aug. 19, 1839 (Cowles MSS), and Keep to Lydia Keep, Nov. 5–13, 1839 (Keep MSS).

schools and colleges were universally closed to the aspiring black man. Against this background, Oberlin was placed as the one haven of refuge for the down-trodden race, the one school where they were freely received, the one hope for their future. A poet of Derby was inspired to write "Lines suggested on hearing Revd. J. Keep lecture on American Slavery":

Away to the rescue ye Britons away, for Liberty groans, in the west,
And the blood of the Slave in a horrible tide has crimsoned her snowy vest,
Affrighted she turns to the land that she loves, and cries for the mighty aid
Of those who ere' while against her foeman united in blessed crusade.

America needs you, ye heroes arise and gird you anew for the strife,
For her falls have re-echoed the groans of the slave, her rivers have swallowed his life,
Her forests & prairies no refuge afford, excepting one holy spot:
'Tis Oberlin's walls; the only retreat where the white man injures him not.[36]

These claims aroused criticism in America from two different sources: the other anti-slavery men and the pro-slavery forces. Other reformers insisted that all the credit for anti-slavery work was being claimed for Oberlin, and other men and institutions were thereby slighted. Beriah Green was much hurt because he felt that insufficient recognition was given to the Oneida Institute.[37] Father Keep was reported as saying in his speech at Glasgow, that it was dangerous to deliver public addresses against slavery in America. If one did, he could expect spies in the audience and slaveholders peering through the doorways, dirk in hand. At this point he held up a deadly looking knife of American manufacture! Abolitionists, he said, were threatened with instant death if they dared to enter a slaveholding state.[38] The *Ohio Observer* picked up this statement and attacked it as "too ridiculously false to have been made by an American minister except under strong excitement."[39] At a previous date the

[36]Copy in Keep MSS.
[37]Keep to Gerrit Smith, Jan. 21, 1842 (Gerrit Smith MSS).
[38]*Report of the Annual Meeting of the Glasgow Emancipation Society, Held August 8, 1840;* etc., (Glasgow—1840), 16–17.
[39]*Ohio Observer* (Hudson), Oct. 22, 1840.

same periodical, never friendly to Oberlin and none too enthusiastic about anti-slavery in general, went so far as to charge Keep and Dawes with "getting money from the people of England under false pretenses."[40]

The extremely patriotic, hundred percent Americans, North and South, were deeply irritated that American citizens should criticize American institutions in a foreign country, particularly in Great Britain, with whom relations were strained at the time.[41] There was something splendid and noble about Dawes' statement that, "Oberlin is not an American Institution, that the peculiar institutions of America are against it, that it solely exists in reference to the abolition of Slavery & the Slave trade throughout the world & [so] as to ameliorate the condition of all men by lessening of human suffering & extirpation [of] all evil."[42] Critics saw nothing in it, however, but treason; they never read beyond the first clause. A Kentuckian even felt called upon to relieve his feelings by writing a letter to Father Keep. "Sir, what can you be called but a traitor," he asked, "false to your *Country* in uniting with a foreign power to abrogate the prerogations licensed by the Constitution of the U. S., and stating roundly, inadvisedly and falsely with what cruelty Slaves in the U. S. was treated?" After describing the anti-slavery men as "matronly hell hounds, misanthropic devils, and traitorous renegades" he closed by observing, "Oh God, Thy Word too oft subserves the villain's viler purpose."[43] Neither the agents nor the leaders in Oberlin were much disturbed by these inharmonious voices; they were accustomed to opposition. Receipts continued to roll up. Nearly £900 was sent home in August of 1839, £800 in November, £1000 in February of 1840 and £1200 in the following June! The total, exchanged into American money, had reached over $19,000 by that date.[44]

One of the biggest efforts made was that to secure an appropriation from the charity funds of the Corporation of London. The petition for a grant was first presented at the Guild Hall before the "Coal and Corn and Finance Committee" of the

[40]*Cleveland Observer,* Feb. 5, 1840.

[41]The Oregon question, the Texas question, the Maine boundary dispute and the *Caroline* Affair had produced a tense situation in the years around 1840.

[42]William Dawes to William I. Dawes, Nov. 2, 1839 (Keep MSS).

[43]H. Hiram Osborn to Mr. Keep, Aug. 1, 1840 (Keep MSS).

[44]Levi Burnell to Keep and Dawes, Aug. 13, 1840 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

London County Council. The agents argued that Oberlin was an international enterprise, properly belonging to the world, and was "pursuing distinctly the welfare of the Nations, as well as that of America," and that the success of Oberlin was, therefore, of direct interest to the city of London, the metropolis of the world. The hearing lasted several hours, after which, by a vote of 15 to 4, the Committee agreed to recommend to the Council an appropriation of £200.[45] It was nearly a month later that the Council heard the committee report in favor of the grant to Oberlin as a means of exercising the moral influence of that body against slavery in the United States. An amendment was introduced, however, expressing "abhorrence of the slave system" but eliminating the donation as "an unwarranted intermeddling with the affairs of foreign powers." When the vote was taken *viva voce* there was some doubt about the outcome and, therefore, a division was called for. Those favoring the grant went to one side of the room and those opposed to the other. "On *our* side," Keep wrote home to his wife, "One cried out to the other—ah, you sustain slavery—let those who love freedom & hate slavery come over here. *No—No—No—No*—was the cry. They rallied each other on both sides & at length the certain count said *lost*—by 4." The vote stood 42 for the amendment and 38 for the original report granting £200.[46] The defeat was a great disappointment at the time, as Keep and Dawes had expected an easy victory after their success in the committee. In later years, however, it seemed surprising that even such a vote should have been received—a sort of moral victory. Certainly the prospects for the mission were not injured by the decision. A number of members of the corporation made personal contributions.

As Cavour is said to have brought Piedmont into the Crimean War in order that he might have a hearing at the peace conference so Keep and Dawes secured appointments as delegates to the international anti-slavery convention held at London in June, 1840, in order that they might present the claims of Oberlin.[47] This convention was called by Joseph Sturge and the

[45]Keep to Theodore Keep, Nov. 19–20, 1839 (Keep MSS).

[46]*Minutes of the Court of Common Council of the Corporation of London*, Dec. 12, 1839 (Thomas Henry Coe, Cheapside, London—Printer), and John Keep to Lydia Keep, Nov. 30—Dec. 15, 1839 (Keep MSS).

[47]"Say to Br. Burnell that, if acceptable to the Society, it may be well for Wm. Dawes & John Keep to have an appointment to represent, with others who may come, Ohio, in the Conference of Nations upon slavery to be holden in

British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, and the aged Thomas Clarkson made his last public appearance as its presiding officer. It was an English-speaking convention, the delegates present being mostly residents of Great Britain, with a few from outlying portions of the Empire: Jamaica, Guiana, Australia, besides fifty from the United States.[48] It was on the evening of June 14, the third day of the convention, that Keep had his opportunity to present Oberlin in a brief address. He described the "accursed and most abominable slave system" of the United States, "the giant sin of the giant republic of the Western hemisphere," as a "scaly and slimy monster," and declared that in "no community was its character ever so bad, or its atrocities so vile." Finally he turned to Oberlin, which he described as "a new seminary . . . , to which the black man is invited, and where he is received to the full enjoyment of the same equal privileges with the white man" and where was being trained an "abolition phalanx" of young men and women "who will go down to him [the Negro] in his degradation, sympathize with him, stay by him, weep over him, pray with him, teach him, comfort him, pour oil into his wounds, and raise him to the dignity of a man."[49] The Oberlin delegates were naturally critical of Garrison and all his activities at the convention, and when the women delegates from the United States were excluded from the floor of the convention, they took the side of propriety. Though Keep was disappointed at the exhibition of dissension and lack of Christian spirit among the American representatives at the convention, all in all, he considered it "a great meeting—much valuable discussion— . . . an influence which could not be had in any other method."[50] At least it had served their purpose of securing further publicity for Oberlin.

The agents found the teas, soirees and banquets to which they were invited excellent means of making contacts. There were many such gatherings during the convention. On June 16 they

London next June. Desire him to do the proper thing, respecting this."—John Keep to Lydia Keep, Sept. 18,–Oct. 9, 1839 (Keep MSS).

[48]Though fifty names of Americans are included in the list of members of the convention, it is known that some were actually not present in London. *Proceedings of the General Anti-Slavery Convention, . . . in London . . . 1840* (London—1841), 573–584.

[49]*Ibid.*, 138–143.

[50]John Keep to Lydia Keep, Mar. 15—June 26, 1840, and July 12, 1840 (Keep MSS).

had tea with E. Reid in company with Lucretia Mott and others. On the 21st they dined at William Ashurst's; Garrison was also present and Mrs. Mott called it "a visit full of interest and delight." Three days later, the last day of the convention, a great banquet was held for all the delegates at the "Crown and Anchor." Here the American radicals had an opportunity to ease themselves of convictions suppressed in the public meeting. Garrison spoke injudiciously (according to Keep) but Lucretia Mott made an excellent impression.[51]

The round of social affairs in London and other great English cities must have been a strange experience for the Ohio Puritans, but, of course, they considered it their duty to attend whenever the cause of Oberlin might be effectively furthered. Mrs. Martineau made it her special task to see that they were introduced to the right people. Invitations and donations followed. "I took the omnibus at ½ past 5," wrote Keep to Mrs. Keep in December of 1839, "to comply with a polite invitation, sent me through Mrs. Martineau's influence, to pass the evening with Mrs. Smith & her Daughters. The result of this visit will be 50 for O[berlin]. They had gotten their opinions & feelings respecting American Slavery from Martineau. Their hearts were full & said I was the *first* American abolitionist they had seen—& put questions to me for 5 hours . . . & got from me the pledge that I would meet them again on the 19, when they will invite in a circle of select friends to learn of Oberlin & America."[52] In the following February, Keep and Dawes were invited to tea at the home of a certain Deacon Piper in London in order that some thirty guests could hear of Oberlin "as it is." One gathering led to another. A week later they received a formal invitation:

> Miss Hannah Travers who had the pleasure of an introduction to the Rev. Mr. Keep and Mr. Dawes about a week ago, at her friend Mr. Piper's, requests the pleasure of their company at tea, some evening that they are disengaged, in order that she may have the gratification of inviting a few friends to meet them to hear particulars respecting the Oberlin Institute.[53]

[51]*James and Lucretia Mott, Life and Letters* (Boston—1884), 155–160; *William Lloyd Garrison,* II, 377, and Keep to Lydia Keep, Mar. 15—June 26, 1840 (Keep MSS).

[52]Keep MSS.

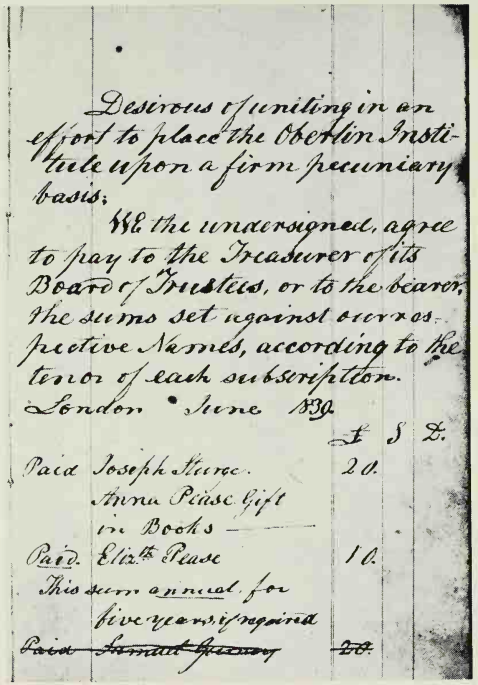
[53]*Ibid.*

When Keep was in Bristol a certain Dr. Estlin "sent his servant with his elegant carriage" to take him out in the country for a call. Sitting alone in this splendid equipage, and reviewing the "enchanting—absolutely *luscious*" landscape, the Reverend Oberlinite felt like an English nobleman, though he realized that "something *more* would be *needed.*" There is no doubt that he enjoyed this glimpse into high society though he was shocked at the "*bare necks* of the *unmarried Ladies* . . . naked clear off each shoulder—& down the back to exposement of the shoulder blades" and, at banquets, turned his glass down with self-righteous satisfaction.[54] In Leeds Mr. Dawes had, in twenty-four hours, "three invitations to sumptuous *dinners*—two of which, duty required that I should attend." At one dinner he found himself "surrounded by *rich, elite* and *influential* & *meats* & drinks to profusion, with 4 several challenges to drink wine as a token of cordial welcome to England." At a quarter to eight he excused himself, though the other guests were "still at their *creams,* jellies, fruits, nuts, wines, etc, etc, etc."[55]

But the mission was not all banquets. One Deacon who was approached for funds declared that Americans were "a set of sharpers" and "it would be better for the world if they were all sunk in the ocean."[56] Often Keep trudged all day long from door to door with little result, or wasted precious hours in the anterooms of the wealthy. It is significant that on one occasion he felt forced to rest for a day or two "on account of blisters on the bottom of my right foot & three painful corns upon the top of the same"!

The total collections were something more than six thousand pounds, about thirty thousand dollars at the rate of exchange then existing. Though several gifts of £100 each were secured from single individuals, the greater part of this money was obtained in small sums from the "lower orders." Thomas Sturge gave a hundred pounds and Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton gave an equal amount. William Evans, a Member of Parliament from Derby, gave fifty pounds. But there were also gifts from "Mrs. Quin and her two grandchildren for whom may prayer be made in Oberlin" and the "Students of the Session Hall in Edinburgh."

[54]Keep to Lydia Keep, July 12, 1840 (Keep MSS).
[55]William Dawes to William I. Dawes, Nov. 2–14, 1839 (Keep MSS).
[56]Keep to Lydia Keep, Sept. 18, 1839, and Mar. 15–June 26, 1840 (Keep MSS).

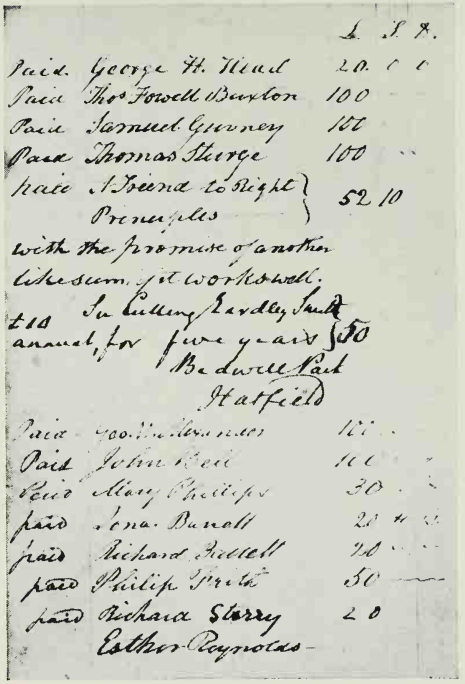


Desirous of uniting in an effort to place the Oberlin Institute upon a firm pecuniary basis;

WE the undersigned, agree to pay to the Treasurer of its Board of Trustees, or to the bearer, the sums set against our respective Names, according to the tenor of each subscription.

London June 1839.

| | | £ | S | D. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Paid | Joseph Sturge. | 20. | | |
| | Anna Pease Gift in Books | | | |
| Paid. | Eliz.th Pease | 10. | | |
| | This sum annual, for five years, if required | | | |
| ~~Paid~~ | ~~Samuel Gurney~~ | ~~20.~~ | | |



| | | £ | S | D. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Paid. | George H. Head | 20. | 0 | 0 |
| Paid | Thos Fowell Buxton | 100 | | |
| Paid | Samuel Gurney | 100 | | |
| Paid | Thomas Sturge | 100 | | |
| paid | N. Friend to Right Principles | 52 | 10 | |
| | with the promise of another like sum, if it works well. | | | |
| £10 annual, for five years | Sir Culling Eardley Smith | 50 | | |
| | Bedwell Park Hatfield | | | |
| Paid | Geo. W. Alexander | 100 | | |
| Paid | John Bell | 100 | | |
| Paid | Mary Phillips | 30 | | |
| paid | Jona. Barnett | 20 | 4 | 3 |
| paid | Richard Bartlett | 20 | | |
| paid | Philip Frith | 50 | | |
| paid | Richard Sterry | 20 | | |
| | Esther Reynolds | | | |

PAGES FROM THE SUBSCRIPTION BOOK OF THE OBERLIN MISSION TO ENGLAND

The most money (£1788) was secured in London and vicinity, though £343 was obtained in Glasgow, £246 in Liverpool, £222 in Manchester, £215 in Birmingham and £537 in Bristol. Bristol gave the itinerants a particularly warm reception: the Mayor gave £5; the Dean of the Cathedral £5; and even Patrick O'Farrell, a Catholic Priest of the city, contributed £1 10S.[57] In addition to cash, about two thousand volumes of books, besides some "philosophical and chemical apparatus," were donated.[58] Finally, Oberlin secured an efficient Secretary and Treasurer in the person of Keep's and Dawes' benevolent host in London, Hamilton Hill. It was hoped that Hill would serve as "a permanent bond of union," "a permanent channel of communication" between Oberlin and England.[59] There was never any doubt about Hill's ability. His minutes and other records are in excellent form. He was always the complete Englishman, however, and did not fit too well into the thoroughly Yankee atmosphere of Oberlin.[60]

God had saved His college! The most pressing demands could now all be met. In February of 1840 the Board of Trustees and faculty united to observe a day of "fasting, humiliation, & prayer," "in view of the special mercies of God, in signally providing for our pecuniary necessities, by raising up for us friends in a foreign land."[61] Keep and Dawes returned to America and Oberlin late in 1840. In the following August they reported in person to the trustees, who formally acknowledged their devout gratitude to God, the English reformers, and Keep and Dawes, and presented forty acres of land to each of the latter.[62] The agents believed that their mission had other results also; that it had helped to "promote a mutual interest and unite the sympathies of good men in both countries," and begun the Oberlinizing of England.[63]

Even before the mission had set sail for England Gerrit Smith

[57]Undated report of Keep and Dawes in Misc. Archives.

[58]*Oberlin Evangelist,* July 7, 1841. There is a catalogue of the books brought from England in the College Library.

[59]Henry Cowles to A. W. Cowles, [?] 26, 1840 (Cowles-Little MSS), and T. M., Aug. 28, 1840. There is an interesting statement written by Hill in his own defense in the Misc. Archives (H. Hill to J. Keep, Aug. 1845).

[60]Leonard's MS Notes on talks with J. H. Fairchild, 1894–1897.

[61]T. M., Feb. 17–18, 1840.

[62]T. M., Aug. 24, 1841.

[63]Statement in *Oberlin Evangelist,* Feb. 3, 1841.

of Peterboro, N. Y., had come to the aid of the bankrupt Institute. Gerrit Smith was a thorough reformer, a friend of education and unwavering enemy to slavery. More important, he was an immensely wealthy man, one of the greatest landowners in the United States. As early as 1836 he had been appealed to, to aid Oberlin. In January John Keep wrote to Smith recommending Oberlin as an institution "preeminent in promoting Revivals," where "slavery is brought upon the table with all its kindred topics." The philanthropist contributed a hundred dollars and was rewarded with a request for more two months later.[64] In the same year, Zebulon Shipherd, the father of Oberlin's Founder, wrote to Smith, inviting him "with cordiality and respect to bestow upon" Oberlin a professorship of $600 per annum.[65] Finally, in April of 1839, Gerrit Smith decided to give to Oberlin twenty thousand acres of land in the western part of Virginia and two thousand dollars in cash.[66] Thus, before the arrival of the mission in England, a ray of hope had appeared; the "Heavenly Father" had "raised up" Smith to be a co-worker in Oberlin's great task.[67]

Some of the gold turned out to be iron pyrites. Arthur Tappan unexpectedly seized $4,752.00 of the British funds; and the title to the Virginia lands was disputed.

Arthur Tappan had lent ten thousand dollars to Oberlin in 1835, but both Shipherd and Finney were led to believe that there was a strong possibility, close to certainty, that the notes given for this loan would be cancelled by later subscriptions. In 1836 two thousand dollars of the loan, as we have seen, were cancelled by subscription. There still remained nearly nine thousand dollars (counting interest) to be paid, but when the mission was sent to England it was definitely understood that funds there obtained would not be demanded by Tappan.[68] In December of 1839 a draft for £800 from Keep and Dawes was negotiated through Arthur Tappan & Co. and immediately applied on

[64]Keep to Smith, Jan. 16, and May 24, 1836, and Receipt for $100.00, Mar. 4, 1836 (Gerrit Smith MSS). See R. V. Harlow, *Gerrit Smith* (New York—1939).

[65]Zebulon Shipherd to Smith, Oct. 20, 1836 (Gerrit Smith MSS).

[66]Gerrit Smith to C. G. Finney, Apr. 25, 1839 (Treas. Off., File I).

[67]Finney and Mahan to Gerrit Smith, May 7, 1839 (Gerrit Smith MSS).

[68]According to "Pres. Finney's Statement of facts concerning Arthur Tappan" made in 1840 [?] (Misc. Archives), supported by implication in a letter from Tappan to Burnell, Apr. 17, 1840, quoted in L. Burnell to John Keep, Apr. 27, 1840 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).

various debts. A second draft on Baring Brothers for £1000 (worth $4,752.00 at exchange) was sent to them in March, but this sum was held for application on the Tappan debt and no withdrawals were allowed. Oberlin men felt that Tappan had been guilty of bad faith, but he was, it should be remembered, fighting an unsuccessful battle against bankruptcy and felt morally and practically bound to liquidate all possible assets. Tappan kept the £1000, but later remittances from England were negotiated through Prime, Ward, & King.[69]

As to the Virginia lands, John Brown, the son of Owen Brown of the Board of Trustees and later of Harper's Ferry fame, was sent as Oberlin's agent in 1840 to investigate and sell these lands. Nothing came of this agency, however, except a claim by Brown against Oberlin and perhaps an interest in Virginia on his part.[70] There seemed very little prospect of realizing anything immediately out of the Gerrit Smith gift. Squatters were in possession of the choicest portions and there was another title covering part of it. The people of the region and the courts of the state were hostile to absentee landlords and Oberlin in particular. It seemed therefore an excellent bargain to exchange ten thousand dubious acres for the remainder of the Tappan debt. In the spring of 1841, therefore, the notes held by Tappan were cancelled in return for a deed from Oberlin for 9637 acres of the Gerrit Smith land.[71] Thus, by 1841, the larger claims against the Institute had all been satisfied and the immediate danger of bankruptcy removed—and Oberlin had been given a broader moral foundation by the contacts established with the Old World.

[69]Burnell to Keep, Apr. 27, 1840, and Henry Cowles to Alice W. Cowles, Oberlin, [?] 26, 1840 (Cowles-Little MSS).

[70]Robert S. Fletcher, "John Brown and Oberlin" in the *Oberlin Alumni Magazine,* Feb. 1, 1932.

[71]A. Tappan & Co. to Oberlin Institute, Feb. 4, 1841 (Treas. Off., File I). This letter contains a summary history of the Tappan debt. Two of the cancelled notes are still in the possession of the college. See also P. C. M., Dec. 7, 1840, Mar. 31, and May 10, 1841.

## CHAPTER XXX

# *MAHAN*

OBERLIN owed much to its first President, Asa Mahan. He was a man of action and of intellect—"the best mind West of the Mountains," Weld had called him in 1834.[1] He became widely known for his several able books in the field of theology and philosophy, most important being his *Doctrine of the Will* (1845) and *Scripture Doctrine of Christian Perfection* (1839). He was the special sponsor of Oberlin's peculiar theological "heresy" and, more than anyone else, of Oberlin's stand on reform. Rivalling Finney as a fiery preacher and an inspiring teacher, he surpassed him in the rude give and take of free-for-all debate. He was "just the man," as one admirer put it, "to keep the public mind awake."[2] It was Mahan who gave to the Oberlin of 1835 to 1850 much of its peculiar tone of effective—and irritating—aggressiveness.

There was never any doubt about Mahan's high moral principles, his sincerity, and his devotion to the truth, but out of these virtues grew his chief shortcomings. He was imperious; he was egotistical; he was overbearing; he would brook no opposition nor criticism. In the heat of argument he would often overstep the bounds of good taste and good manners. Mahan was the sort of man who made firm friends and bitter enemies, unfortunately, many of the latter. In Oberlin the number of his enemies grew until they included all of the faculty and many of the trustees and, at last, as a result he was forced to resign.

The dismissal of John P. Cowles in 1839 may be taken as the beginning of the series of quarrels which culminated in 1850 in Mahan's departure. There were some, including Cowles' brother, Henry Cowles, who blamed Mahan for this unfortunate episode and never quite forgave him for it.[3] As a result of his

[1] J. J. Shipherd to J. Keep, Dec. 15, 1834 (O. C. Lib. Misc. MSS).
[2] Sherlock Bristol to Henry Cowles, Dec. 26, 1844 (Cowles MSS).
[3] See above, pages 432–434.

highhanded methods in meetings of the faculty[4] and his cruel and tactless personal allusions in public and in private the number of those who felt themselves personally aggrieved steadily increased. As early as 1844 he was requested by his colleagues to resign, on the ground that "his constitutional traits are so annoying that the other members of the faculty cannot work with him." He was charged with tyrannizing over the students and with treating the professors harshly. It was declared that he was unpopular with the colonists and that he was "the chief obstacle to pacification in the Ministry around." There were several, however, including John Keep, who pointed out that it would be suicidal to dismiss "one of the most talented, spiritual, laborious, efficient and influential of their number, the honored head of their Institution." Could the *Oberlin Evangelist* possibly stand the loss of one of its ablest contributors? Was it not well that there should be one man in Oberlin "whose terrible rebuke, all, and especially the wayward, will fear and dread?" What would be the effect on the reform causes and sanctification if their leading sponsor should be dropped? Perhaps, after all, the real cause of opposition to him was his aggressiveness on these questions. If Mahan left, would not the now increasing cautiousness of Professor Morgan supercede the bold and righteous assertiveness of the President as the dominant motif in Oberlin thought and action?[5] Mahan promised his colleagues that if they would waive their opposition to his continuance in the presidency for the time-being he would retire without complaint if at any future date they should again become dissatisfied. The atmosphere was thus temporarily cleared, though some unpleasant rumors filtered out into the press.[6]

The trouble over the payment of salaries, which came to a head in 1846, served to rekindle the fires of factionalism.[7] Dawes and the President thought the teachers should accept with gratitude

[4]J. H. Fairchild is quoted by Leonard: "At a faculty meeting he had laid down the law, or announced a policy which the faculty sat down on to a man, when he arose, said, Gentlemen I can't remain in such a place & left."—"Notes upon Talks with Pres. Fairchild" from Dec. 20, 1894 to Nov. 16, 1897.

[5]Bristol to Cowles, Dec. 26, 1844, and S. D. Cochran *et al.* to the faculty, Dec. 30, 1844 (Cowles MSS). A powerful statement of the case for Mahan is contained in a scathing letter from Sherlock Bristol to the faculty (Treas. Off., File K).

[6]John Morgan and others of the faculty to Mahan, Mar. 18, 1850, and the *Oberlin Evangelist,* Aug. 14, 1845.

[7]See pages 493–494, below.

what funds could be collected and not expect always to receive their full salaries. Mahan's salary was fully subscribed, but others were not so lucky, and Mahan *"most entirely objected* to any part of the money subscribed for him being appropriated to any other use whatever than for himself." As one means of economy it was decided to drop Hamilton Hill.[8] The old sores were opened. Professor William Cochran resigned and Finney threatened to go. "The devil is at Oberlin sure enough," wrote Lewis Tappan. "Tell it not in Gath. What an exemplification of the Oberlin sanctification." Tappan suspected that Mahan's imperiousness might be at the root of the matter. "It is thought by some that *you* are too critical [?] & overbearing"; he warned him, "that you assume too much; that you concede too little. . . . I love you much brother Mahan & therefore I write so freely. Do examine yourself & check every seeking of ambition. Do not Lord it over God's heritage nor insist upon having everything as you think & as you say. Do not magnify yourself."[9]

In 1848 and 1849 Mahan was entangled in a famous church trial, which fairly tore the Oberlin community asunder. Back in 1846 a certain Mrs. G—— abandoned her children and husband, a leading Oberlinite, formerly General Agent of the College and publisher of the *Evangelist*. She declared that, as she was no longer in the flesh but "in the resurrection state, . . . it would be wrong for her to live with Mr. G—— as her husband." The church thereupon excommunicated her but she was readmitted when it was decided that she was insane! For a while she was held in an insane asylum, and upon her return from that institution her husband excluded her from his home. Thereupon, in February of 1848, Peter Pindar Pease brought a series of charges against him before the Oberlin Church. G——, he held, had "violated the marriage covenant" in refusing to live with his wife and in abusing and neglecting her. He was also charged with "neglect of family worship," lying, and "improper conduct towards other ladies."[10]

[8]Joab Seeley to Hill, July 23, 1846 (Treas. Off., File O); H. Hill to Whipple, Mar. 6, 1850 (Treas. Off., File N); William Dawes to Henry Cowles, Mar., 1846 (Cowles-Little MSS), and Lewis Tappan to William Dawes, Mar. 24, 1846 (Tappan Letter Books). Hill was retained.

[9]Tappan to Finney, Apr. 27, and to Mahan, Apr. 27, 1846 (Tappan Letter Books).

[10]Oberlin Church, MS Records, Apr. 22, 1846; June 14, 1847, and Feb. 25, 1848.

The actual trial did not begin until the following June, and then lasted for a matter of weeks. The wife related her woes and the husband told in detail his story of connubial infelicity. The trouble, said he, was that Mrs. G—— had "a will as unchangeable as the tide of time." About half the town testified: Professor Finney, Dr. and Mrs. Dascomb, Professor John Morgan, William Dawes and Mrs. Dawes, William W. Wright, Horace C. Taylor, President and Mrs. Mahan and innumerable lesser lights. The testimony taken occupies some hundreds of manuscript pages.[11] President Mahan, as council and as witness, threw himself, with his usual precipitancy, unreservedly on the side of G—— "in untiring effort to screen him from [what was, according to the majority] deserved rebuke!" Among others, Professor Henry Cowles felt that the President's action was unwise and mistaken, if not worse. Part of the charges were sustained and part not sustained. On Christmas Day by a vote of 31 to 23 the accused husband was excommunicated.[12] As a result of this episode, by the beginning of 1849 the relation between the President and the faculty had again become tense. Mrs. Brewster Pelton, the wife of the keeper of the tavern and a close friend of the Mahans, was holding parties "partly for the sake of promoting social feeling & partly to help support the tavern." There was great need certainly of "promoting social feeling" and the tavern has usually needed "supporting." The clouds were gathering again, and again there was much talk of asking President Mahan to resign.[13]

Fortunately Mahan was away in France and in England, attending the World Peace Congress and preaching, during most of 1849 and part of 1850, or he would, undoubtedly, have become involved likewise in the controversy over the appointment to the Oberlin postmastership, which led eventually to another involved church trial and an investigation of Representative Joshua Giddings in Congress.[14] On the other hand, Mahan's absence gave

[11]Preserved in the MSS of the Oberlin Church (O. C. Lib.).

[12]Anon. to Cowles [1848]; Henry Cowles to M. D. P. Cowles, July 28, 1848; Henry Cowles to Helen Cowles, Feb. 7, 1849 (Cowles-Little MSS); Mahan to the Trustees, Aug. 15, 1854 (Trustees' MSS in the Misc. Archives), and Oberlin Church, MS Records, July 11 and Dec. 25, 1848.

[13]T. B. Hudson to James Monroe, Jan. 1, 1849 (Monroe MSS).

[14]Oberlin Church, MS Records; various papers in Cowles-Little MSS, and *H. R. Journal*, 31 Cong., I sess., July 5, 1850 (1079–1080), July 6 (1086), and Sept. 10, 1850 (1441).

his irreconcilable opponents a chance to organize and make their plans for another attack.

Upon his landing in New York all was ready for him. Joab Seeley, an agent of Oberlin, had persuaded the people of a church at Newark, N. J., to give him a call to be their pastor. This would furnish him a reasonable excuse for resigning his position at Oberlin; neither he nor Oberlin need be embarrassed. George Whipple and Lewis Tappan talked to him heart-to-heart, urging him to accept the call and retire from the presidency quietly, "in such a manner as would not exhibit to the world a quarrel between the members of the faculty."[15] But Asa Mahan was not to be so easily set aside; when he reached Oberlin he never said a word about his call to the Newark church. It had been previously decided to present him a statement upon his arrival, advising his resignation. Such a formal statement signed by all of the faculty was prepared the last of February and presented to him on March 5, 1850. They expressed their views frankly enough: "We think that God has given you eminent abilities as preacher & public speaker. . . . We believe, also, that your talents as a writer have made you useful to many souls & might make you useful to many more. . . . While we cordially thus express our high estimate of your abilities in the respects we have indicated, we must with equal frankness say that we regard you as deficient in those peculiar gifts which qualify for the presidency of a literary Institution. This has long been with us a growing & is now ripe conviction. With all your endowments, God does not appear to us to have given you that peculiar sort of wisdom & tact which is specially necessary in the President of a College to unite the Faculty in confiding & cheerful cooperation with him as their head & leader."[16] They, therefore, expressed their hope that he would retire from the presidency of Oberlin and accept the call to Newark.

Instead of resigning, Mahan gathered his henchmen about him and fought back. Most prominent among his supporters in this crisis were William Dawes, Rev. George Clark (a Lane Rebel and evangelist conducting services in Oberlin at the time), Brewster Pelton and Thirza Pelton, and (less enthusiastically) Dr.

[15]George Whipple to Hamilton Hill, Feb. 12, 1850 (Treas. Off., File F), and John Morgan to Finney, Mar. 12, 1850 (Finney MSS).

[16]John Morgan *et al.* to Mahan, Feb. 28, 1850 (Treas. Off., File F).

Isaac Jennings and his son, John Jennings. Shortly after receiving the formal statement from the faculty, the President addressed a note to Mr. Dawes, declaring that the faculty had asked him to vacate his position without presenting specific charges. Would Dawes please make "inquiries on the subject?"[17] Of course, the latter immediately bestirred himself to bring pressure to bear in behalf of the President. On March 11 a statement signed by three resident trustees: Dawes, Josiah B. Hall and Isaac Jennings, was presented to Mahan.[18] They declared that "a large majority of the students, embracing all the departments of the institution, as well also, a large proportion of the Colonists, including the most spiritual, besides almost the entire number of all the christian patrons of the institution throughout the churches in our land" believed that his removal would "cause *great sensation,* and lasting grief." The remedy for the evils prevailing in the Institute, they declared, was not to be found in the "removal of its President but by [in] a speedy return, of all concerned in its operations, to the original principles & methods of promoting the kingdom of our Redeemer."[19] The trouble was not with Mahan but with the faculty, they held. The professors were not fully in sympathy with the President's views on the teaching of the Bible and the omission of the "heathen classics." The "reformatory character [of Oberlin] & its peculiarities which have constituted its excellencies" would be done away with, they insisted, if the President resigned. The Oberlin idea and the Oberlin ideal were at stake.[20]

The faculty thereupon replied to the President and his supporters in another formal statement. Mr. Mahan, said they, had misconstrued and misinterpreted their previous statement—"so far as respects the nature of our communication to you, your letter is incorrect from beginning to end." Further to strengthen their case they quoted from a letter from Professor Finney: "The loss of confidence in Bro. M's discretion & fitness for his position in several respects has become so universal in the Faculty & so

[17]Mahan to Dawes, Mar. 8, 1850 (Misc. Archives) and Dawes to Pelton, [?], 1850 (Treas. Off., File F).

[18]These were three of the four resident trustees, Finney being absent. P. P. Pease refused to sign. Hall played no great part in the controversy because of his early removal to Iowa and subsequent resignation from the Board.

[19]William Dawes *et al.* to Mahan, Mar. 11, 1850 (Misc. Archives).

[20]H. Hill to G. Whipple, Mar. 12, 1850 (Treas. Off., File N), and John Morgan to Finney, Mar. 12, 1850 (Finney MSS).

extensive in the Community that to go on so is useless & *even impossible.*" Finally they reminded the President of his pledge to resign if the faculty requested it.[21] A crisis had been reached and an explosion seemed certain. President Mahan insisted that he would not leave unless compelled. Some of the faculty were ready to resign; Dawes and his associates were talking of dismissing them all.

It was a clear issue: were "the services of the President or those of all the rest of the Faculty . . . of most importance to the Institution?"[22] On April 1 a special meeting of the trustees was called for the 18th of the same month to make the decision.

All was gloom and apprehension when the trustees assembled on the date fixed,—"there was darkness that could be felt." It was the darkest meeting, wrote Father Keep to Finney, "the darkest I ever attended . . . & I had been through many storms."[23] After some preliminaries the faculty presented their case and it was fully discussed. Then petitions were received from colonists and students.[24] Dawes had, evidently, been very active; the great majority of signers seemed to favor the President. Two identical petitions were received from the "inhabitants of Oberlin," declaring that they had "heard with pain & regret of the contemplated resignation of President Mahan & of the possibility of his removal to a distant field," and earnestly expressing their desire that he might be retained in office. There were 285 signatures, headed by Thirza and Brewster Pelton, and including John G. Jennings, Emily P. Burke (the late Lady Principal), and even Chauncey Wack, proprietor of Wack's tavern![25] Between eighty and ninety colored citizens presented a petition in which they "*most earnestly implore*[*d*]" Mahan not to resign.[26] Over two hundred students expressed their desire that the President "should still retain the position you have so long occupied and honored." "As a spiritual guide we need your counsel and advice, as a teacher

[21]John Morgan and the other members of the faculty to Mahan, Mar. 18, 1850 (Misc. Archives).

[22]H. C. Taylor to George Whipple, Apr. 1, 1850 (Treas. Off., File P), and John Morgan to Finney, May 7, 1850 (Finney MSS).

[23]John Keep to Finney, June 3, 1850 (Finney MSS).

[24]T. M., Apr. 18, 19, 20, 1850.

[25]Originals of petitions are in the Miscellaneous Archives.

[26]John Copeland (of John Brown fame), Henry Harris, and "Mahalia" are in the list. Two or three names are wholly illegible, and others are obviously misspelled, like "preter pointze."

your faithfulness and instruction, as a christian your precepts and example." On the other hand, twelve of the 128 male students who had signed this petition requested the next day that their names be removed, and nineteen other male students from the Collegiate Department prepared a joint statement declaring that they had "a tender regard not alone for our much esteemed Pres." . . . "but that in the other members of the Faculty we repose an undiminished confidence and that we value them [also] as Instructors and men." Also 25 adult male citizens (including such well-known men as Nathaniel Gerrish, Hiram A. Pease, William H. Plumb, Fay Hopkins, Dr. Alexander Steele, Lewis Holtslander, and Dr. Homer Johnson) united to express their opinion "that Pres. Mahan's greatest usefulness, the highest well-being of the church, of this community, of the Institution, and of the cause of Zion, demand that his connection with this Institution do now cease."

On the third day a settlement was reached. The trustees were ready to accept Mahan's resignation but as he would not offer it they did not feel justified in asking him to retire. It was finally decided that the faculty would withdraw their request for his resignation if the President would accede to a "basis of unity and hearty cooperation" drawn up by the faculty and trustees jointly, and containing their chief objections to his character and conduct. The paper as presented to Mahan, provided that

"1. He should see that his self-esteem has amounted to self conceit & has led him to over-rate both his natural abilities & his moral attainments, & that under the same influence he underrates the ability & character of his brethren.

"2. He should see his tendency to attribute unworthy motives to his brethren & promise to do so no more.

"3. He should see his tendency to set forth himself & the institution and Oberlin in a boastful manner & thus exhibit us in an attitude that is odious to God & man.

"4. He should be aware of his tendency to deal in wholesale denunciation of the church & the ministry & to publish anecdotes unadvisedly, derogatory to the character of individuals.

"5. He should see his tendency to make strong positive statements amounting, though not intended, to misrepresentation as to matters of fact on points where he is committed & promise to guard against it.

"6. He should be aware of his liability, in his popular political discourses to assume an attitude & use language unbecoming to a Christian minister & the President of a religious Institution.

"7. He should be careful not to leave his work in the Institution without consultation & arrangement with his brethren, thus embarrassing our operations & burdening the other Instructors.

"8. He should refrain from agitating the minds of the Students on questions which involve the established order of the Institution.

"9. He should refrain from committing the Institution to sentiments which he only holds or which are contrary to the views of his brethren.

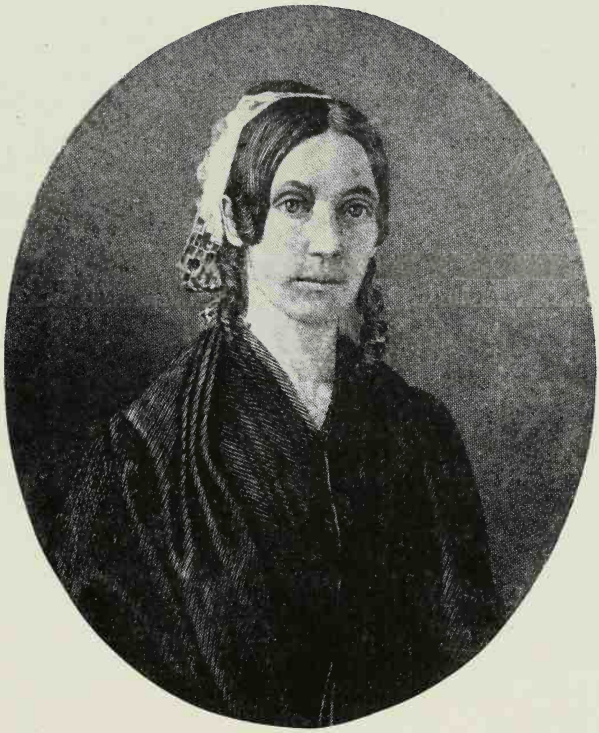
"10. He should not act as counsel in cases of discipline before the Church in Oberlin, or interfere in such a way as to endanger the harmony of the Church."[27]

The paper was read to the President, article by article, and thus assented to by him. He seemed to be "very sincere & hearty in his admission of the specified faults & in his consent to the course demanded." He promised to do his utmost to amend. So, wrote Keep to Finney, "By early candle light on Sat. eve [April 20], . . . the whole Faculty, in the presence of the Trustees, & with them . . . all took each other by the hand . . . full of hopes & promise." Of course, "the result was received by the community & the students with general rejoicing." The great excitement passed off quickly and it seemed that a new period of peace and harmony was beginning. When George Whipple, one of those who had been most prominent in taking action with regard to the President, visited Oberlin a little later, Mrs. Mahan invited him and all of the families of the faculty to her house for supper. It was agreed that Mr. Mahan was very cordial.[28]

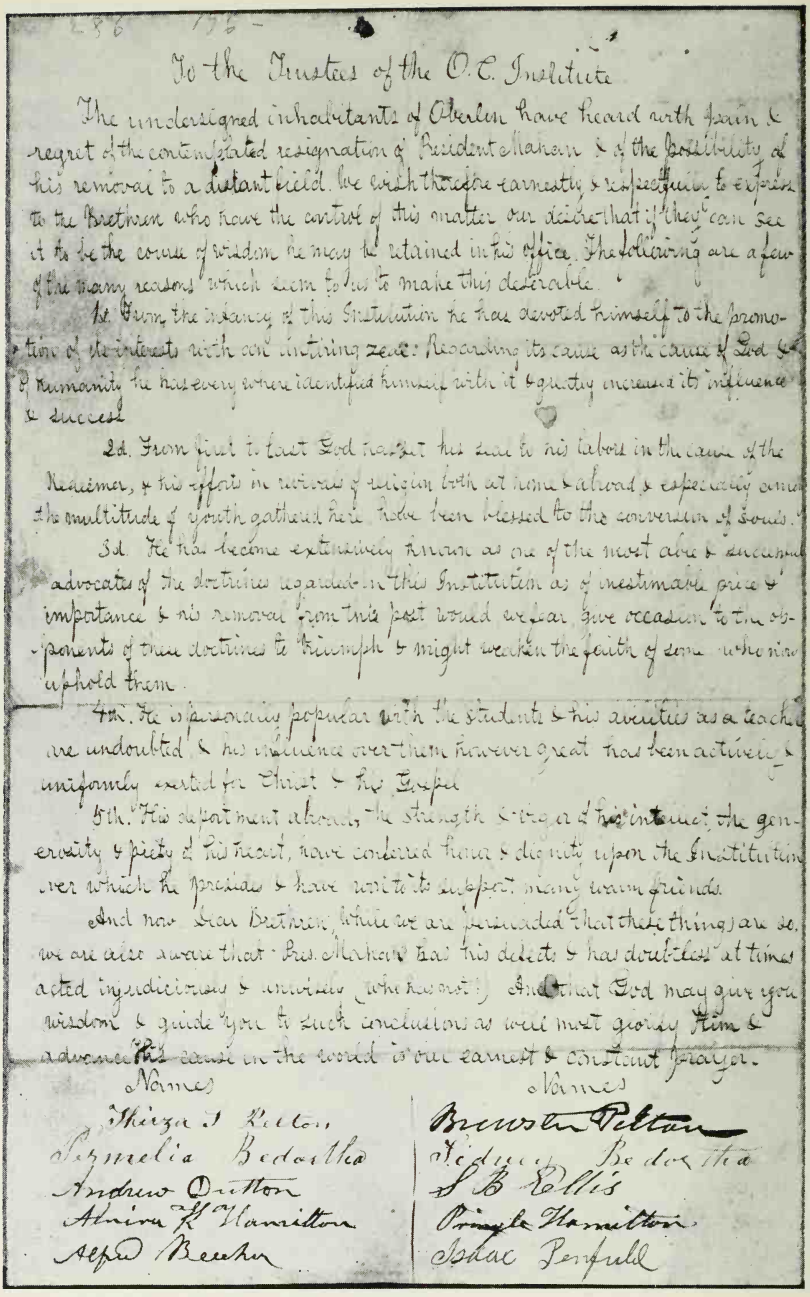
But, in the meantime, new fuel was being added to the fire. When Oberlin tired of discussing the troubles with the President there was always Mrs. Emily Pillsbury Burke to consider. Mrs. Burke was the new Principal of the Female Department. She came to Oberlin highly recommended by the Rev. Samuel Aikin, then of the First Presbyterian Church of Cleveland, after several years experience as a teacher in female seminaries in Georgia and

[27]T. M., Apr. 20, 1850, and elsewhere.

[28]John Keep to Finney, June 3, 1850, and John Morgan to Finney, May 7, 1850 (Finney MSS).



EMILY PILLSBURY BURKE
(From E. P. Burke, *Reminiscences of Georgia* [Oberlin—1850])



To the Trustees of the O. C. Institute

The undersigned inhabitants of Oberlin have heard with pain & regret of the contemplated resignation of President Mahan & of the possibility of his removal to a distant field. We wish therefore earnestly & respectfully to express to the Brethren who have the control of this matter our desire that if they can see it to be the course of wisdom he may be retained in his office. The following are a few of the many reasons which seem to us to make this desirable.

1st. From the infancy of this Institution he has devoted himself to the promotion of its interests with our entire confidence. Regarding its cause as the cause of God & of humanity he has every where identified himself with it & greatly increased its influence & success.

2d. From first to last God has set his seal to his labors in the cause of the Redeemer, & his efforts in revivals of religion both at home & abroad & especially among the multitudes of youth gathered here have been blessed to the conversion of souls.

3d. He has become extensively known as one of the most able & successful advocates of the doctrines upon which this Institution as of inestimable price & importance & his removal from this post would at least give occasion to the opponents of these doctrines to triumph & might weaken the faith of some who now uphold them.

4th. He is personally popular with the students & his qualities as a teacher are undoubted & his influence over them however great has been actively & uniformly exerted for Christ & his Gospel.

5th. His department abroad, the strength & vigor of his intellect, the generosity & piety of his heart, have conferred honor & dignity upon the Institution over which he presides & have won it its present many warm friends.

And now Dear Brethren, while we are persuaded that these things are so, we are also aware that Bro. Mahan has his defects & has doubtless at times acted injudiciously & unwisely (who has not?) And that God may give you wisdom & guide you to such conclusions as will most glorify Him & advance His cause in the world is our earnest & constant prayer.

| Names | Names |
|---|---|
| Thirza S. Pelton | Brewster Pelton |
| Nazmelia Bedortha | Sidney Bedortha |
| Andrew Dutton | L. B. Ellis |
| Almira W. Hamilton | Pamela Hamilton |
| Alfred Beecher | Isaac Penfield |

PETITION FOR THE RETENTION OF MAHAN HEADED BY THIRZA PELTON

(From the original in the Miscellaneous Archives)

in New England.[29] Though she was "very plain looking," her sociability, familiarity, and gentleness with the young ladies won her popularity immediately; it was so much in contrast to the stiff and stern rule of Mary Ann Adams. At first her pleasing character and thorough knowledge of the Bible gained her the approbation and respect of the faculty and their wives, also. All were pleased with the energy with which she went about cleaning, renovating and refurnishing Ladies' Hall. "But alas!" wrote Mary Jane Churchill, wife of Professor Churchill, to her brother, "the Ladies Board have taken a miff and sent her adrift. So it has turned us into the greatest excitement. The young ladies cry and gentlemen too pretty near, and the old ones scold and wonder."[30] It seems that she "k-i-s-s-e-d" one of the young gentlemen who boarded in the Hall. The shocked (and probably not particularly flattered) young man rushed posthaste to the Ladies' Board and told them of this affront to his manly purity! The Board immediately dismissed her; "such a principal will not do for our daughters," said they. In January another lady was appointed to succeed the fallen one.[31]

The poor, hurt creature fled from the cruel action of the Ladies' Board to the sheltering home of her friend and fellow-poetess, Thirza Pelton. There her many sympathetic friends, including the young lady students, could come to weep with her, and when the momentous special session of the trustees of April, 1850, had finished with the question of the President's "self conceit" they turned to hear from Mrs. Burke. She had been treated "unjustly and in an unchristian manner," she said. She besought the trustees to call for the charges against her and give her a fair trial and an opportunity to defend her reputation, "according to the injunction, 'Judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.' " She was backed up by three petitions: one signed by fifty young lady students, one by 13 male students, and the third by 99 citizens of Oberlin.[32] "We feel grieved," declared the young ladies, "by being deprived of her instruction, sympathy & influence,

[29]Mrs. E. P. Burke, *Reminiscences of Georgia . . .* (J. M. Fitch [Oberlin]—1850). See also *P. C. M.*, n.d. [June or July], Sept. 18, Oct. 9, and Nov. 6, 1849.

[30]Mary Jane Turner Churchill to brother, Jan. 27, 1850 (lent by Mrs. Azariel Smith, Whittier, Calif.). This letter, which is the chief source of the story, is corroborated in essential points by the documents.

[31]P. C. M., Jan. 28, 1850.

[32]Original petitions in the Misc. Archives. Mrs. Pelton published a long poem in book form in 1850: *The Grave in the Wilderness: A Poem.*

which we enjoyed for a few months, with, as we supposed, a reasonable hope that she would be continued to us." Four out of five members of the Ladies' Board, feeling that they were no longer supported by public opinion, offered their resignations. The trustees thereupon expressed "their entire confidence in the ability, integrity & sound discretion of" the members of the Board, thus politely, but effectively, rebuking Mrs. Burke.[33]

As the weeks went by it became increasingly apparent that the settlement of April had not been a settlement at all but merely a truce. The wives of the members of the faculty did not reciprocate the friendly advances made by Mrs. Mahan, and the latter felt that she was being openly snubbed. The Mahan and Burke controversies were complicated by a re-opening of the post office affair and the wounds resulting from the recent divorce trial were evidently still rankling. Oberlin seemed to be about to disintegrate.[34] Thirza Pelton had an inspiration. Before Oberlin completely collapsed why should not the members of the President's party pull out of the wreck, taking with them as many students and the good-will of as many of Oberlin's old patrons as possible, and found a new institution in which all would be of one mind and purpose? Mrs. Pelton and John G. Jennings secured a tract of land, just across the Cuyahoga, south from Cleveland. On this tract they would establish a "National University" (later officially called Cleveland University), of which Mahan would be President, and a female seminary, Sigourney Seminary,[35] of which Mrs. Burke would be the head. The Rev. George Clark and William Dawes were to act as financial agents. In June and July these plans were put into effect. Clark and Mrs. Pelton began collecting funds in Boston and elsewhere; several thousand acres of land were purchased, and Mahan tentatively accepted the presidency of the embryonic institution.[36] There is no doubt that the "National University" was a real threat to Oberlin, and

[33]T. M., Apr. 22, 1850.

[34]Dolson Cox, Helen Finney C. Cox, and Charles Finney to C. G. Finney, Aug. 19, 1850, and (as to Mrs. Mahan's social relations) John Morgan to Finney, Aug. 15, 1850 (Finney MSS).

[35]Reference to Sigourney Seminary in obituary of Mrs. Pelton, *Elyria Courier,* Feb. 16, 1853.

[36]Mary C. Rudd Allen to George Allen, June 6, 1850, and W. W. Wright to Allen, July 28, 1850 (in possession of Miss Mary Cochran, Cincinnati); Willard Sears to Finney, Boston, June 18, 1850; Charles Finney to C. G. Finney, July 9, 1850, and John Morgan to Finney, Aug. 15, 1850 (Finney MSS).

it was recognized by most as being a potentially dangerous rival. The name aroused ironical comment among many, however, who considered it a typical expression of Mahan's "self conceit" and egotism. It was even suggested that a more appropriate name would be: "The Universal University for all Creation wherein the Idea of the Infinite will be fully Elucidated and all who do not admit the fact will be sent to their proper place by its Pres., the greatest man who ever has or ever will live, associated with the greatest woman in the 19th century, who must be at the head too!"[37]

Late in August came the regular annual meeting of the Board of Trustees. Mahan presented his resignation, simply stating that he had already accepted the presidency of the new institution in Cleveland. A committee of Oberlin citizens presented a petition asking for his retention, but the trustees "told them that the President had left the Board no alternative & that they saw no room for negotiation." The resignation was unanimously accepted and a "respectful & affectionate, but not flattering" resolution was adopted in recognition of the President's fifteen years of service. Morgan was appointed President Pro Tempore. Thus quietly was the long conflict between President Mahan and the faculty concluded. "There is no commotion among either students or people on account of Pres. Mahan's resignation," wrote the Acting President to Finney shortly after, "& I do not think there will be. . . . We trust the Institution will not be 'dismantled' on account of his absence, though we shall probably lose some of his warm admirers as soon as they can provide accommodations for them at the 'National University.' " By November Father Keep found the faculty "harmonious" and "general tranquility & union . . . returning to the Colony."[38]

For the site of the projected Cleveland University (the name "National" was early abandoned) a tract of about 275 acres of land was purchased by Brewster Pelton and John G. Jennings on the heights overlooking the Cuyahoga river, about a mile south of the city. The setting was inspiring. There was a magnificent prospect of Cleveland and Lake Erie, and there were many

[37]Homer Johnson to George N. Allen, July 15, 1850 (in the possession of Miss Mary Cochran, Cincinnati).

[38]John Morgan to Finney, Aug. 31, 1850, and John Keep to Finney, Aug. 30, and Nov. 18, 1850 (Finney MSS); various papers in Trustees' MSS, 1850; and T. M., Aug. 26 and 28, 1850.

fine trees located just where they would be "needed for the formation of walks, arbors, rides and fountains," with which it was expected that the grounds would be adorned. Part of this land was to be divided into city residential lots, the proceeds of the sale of which were supposed to provide part of the needed funds. The remainder was to be kept for the campus, whereon were to be erected the buildings for the university, the female seminary and an orphanage![39]

Mahan brought with him from Oberlin certain educational theories and practices. The manual labor system was to be installed and less emphasis was to be put on the heathen classics and more on the Bible. (The omission of "Joint Education" is notable.) In addition, it was declared to be a fixed principle of the institution not to run in debt and, in order to save money, no dormitories were to be erected. Mahan intended to establish in the plan of study what he chose to call the "new education." This seems to have meant a liberalized curriculum with an elective system, the object of instruction being "not to carry the student through a multitude of studies without his thoroughly mastering any one of them, but to perfect him in those he does study." The university was intended to be a source of civic pride and enlightenment. A sort of extension system was planned whereby the public would be admitted by ticket to the popular lectures which were to be a part of every course, and thereby the university would "present facilities for mental and moral instruction to all the surrounding population." Cleveland was thus to be made "the great Athens of the great valley of the West." "Let the commerce of the city continue to increase . . . ," prophesied Mahan, "and then let the light of Science from University Heights dawn over the whole scene . . . and who can tell to what extent Cleveland will enlarge its borders and strengthen its stakes."[40]

When in March, 1851, Cleveland University was incorporated

[39]The association of these institutions is reminiscent of Mark Twain's *Connecticut Yankee!* A Master's Thesis by Maude E. Holtz on "Cleveland University, a Forgotten Chapter in Cleveland's History," prepared in 1930, is in the Library of Western Reserve University. It contains much valuable factual material. Miss Holtz has overlooked the first official announcement of Cleveland University in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer,* Oct. 23, 1850.

[40]*Plain Dealer,* Oct. 23, 1850. See also the statement of objects in *Ibid.,* Mar. 19, 1851, which is quoted in Holtz, *Op. Cit.,* 10–12. Levi Burnell was also associated with the university as a trustee and official.

by act of the Ohio legislature, the Board of Trustees contained several prominent Cleveland businessmen and the Oberlin–Mahan clique: Mahan himself, William Dawes, the Rev. George Clark, and Brewster Pelton (representing his wife),—all except Jennings. The construction of the building was begun seemingly in the summer of 1851; there were encouraging reports of progress in the autumn. Classes began in temporary quarters in the city in April, 1851. In the following August commencement exercises were held in the Melodeon Building. Three young men (all former Oberlin students) were graduated and Mahan delivered his inaugural address on "The Comparative Merits of the Old and New Systems of Liberal Education." A faculty, including professors of Music, Natural Science, Modern Languages, Mathematics, Elocution, Oratory and Belles Lettres (James A. Thome, formerly of Oberlin), and Mental and Moral Philosophy (Mahan, of course), was selected. In the following spring recitations and lectures were being held in the new building on the heights. At this time there were 37 students enrolled, though not all of them were "*regularly* entered." At the Commencement held in June of 1852 eight of these (five former Oberlin students) were granted degrees. In December of the same year Mahan resigned and the short course of the Cleveland University was finished.[41]

The sudden collapse was due to a number of causes. A break between Mrs. Pelton and Mahan in the spring of 1851 led to a lack of harmony which would probably alone have been mortal to the enterprise. The rivalry between the Cleveland University and Oberlin College was often denied but oftener admitted. Mahan and Dawes naturally approached the former donors to Oberlin for financial aid for their new university, and this caused more ill-feeling at Oberlin. Someone in Oberlin retaliated by showing Mahan's "Confessions" of April, 1850, to some of the most influential backers of Cleveland University. The result was that Ex-Governor William Slade of Vermont, the Secretary and Treasurer and one of the most prominent figures connected with the enterprise, withdrew, and certain individuals in Boston

[41]Holtz, *Op. Cit., passim.* The data on the number of students comes from a letter from Levi Burnell to H. Hill, Apr. 19, 1852 (Treas. Off., File V). In a letter to George M. Jones (Mar. 12, 1940), Dr. F. C. Waite of Western Reserve University called attention to the fact that so many of the graduates were formerly Oberlin students.

who had made large subscriptions refused to pay them.[42] This appears to have been the death-blow. The building of the university was later occupied by Humiston's Cleveland Institute. John Jennings made a respectable fortune and a reputation by his sale of the lands on the heights which were later known as the "Jennings allotments."[43] The university is chiefly remembered today through the names of streets: College Street, University Street, Literary Street, Professor Street, Pelton Avenue and Jennings Avenue, and by the Pilgrim Congregational Church which was founded by the same group which attempted to establish the university.[44] What became of Emily Pillsbury Burke is still a puzzle. Mrs. Pelton died early in 1853.

Just what the occupation of Asa Mahan was from his resignation of the presidency of Cleveland University in 1852 to the time when he assumed the duties of a pastor at Jackson, Michigan, in 1855 is unknown. Most certain it is, however, that he continued to be a thorn in the flesh of Oberlin. For five years he pressed his claim for back salary with an exasperating persistence which would have been impolitic for a teacher still on the faculty. He even demanded payment for services rendered during vacations since 1835. In reply the trustees insisted on docking him for time lost while in Europe in 1849–50. On one occasion Mahan turned one of the college notes over to one of his creditors, the latter threatening to use legal methods to collect. Some payments were made, but even in 1856 the dismissed President was asserting "that both in law & equity the college" was indebted to him to the extent of "from $600 to $1200 at least." By that date the trustees had ceased to give any consideration to his pleas.[45]

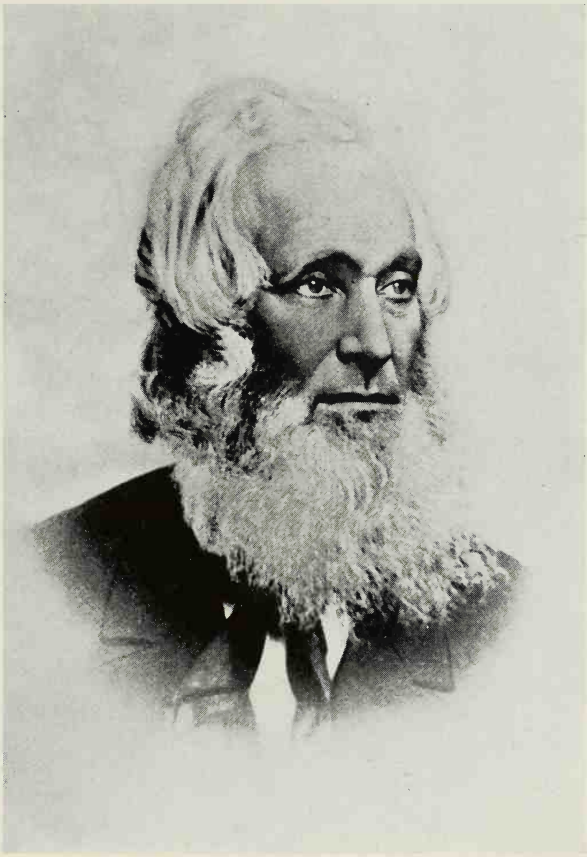
Mahan could not forgive Finney for the letter he had written from England supporting the faculty stand against him. Mr.

[42]H. Hill to Whipple, Mar. 17, 1851 (Treas. Off., File N). The death of Mrs. Pelton could hardly have been a factor as it probably did not take place until after Mahan's resignation. Obituary in the *Elyria Courier*, Feb. 16, 1853. See also Keep to Finney, Dec. 28, 1850 (Finney MSS); Mahan to Gerrit Smith, Aug. 27, 1851 (Gerrit Smith MSS); *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Oct. 23, 1850; Asa Mahan to the Trustees of Oberlin College, Aug. 15, 1855 (Trustees' MSS in Misc. Archives), and T. M., Aug. 22, 1854, and Aug. 20, 1855.

[43]See the brief biography of Jennings in the *Memorial Record of the County of Cuyahoga and City of Cleveland, Ohio* (Chicago—1894), 113–114.

[44]*Pilgrim Church, History and Directory, 1859–1929* (Cleveland [1929]).

[45]T. M., Aug. 25, 1851; Aug. 23, 1852; Aug. 2, 1855, and Aug. 25, 1856; P. C. M., Nov. 6, and 14, 1851; Mahan to Hill, Oct. 4, 1851, Feb. 24, Apr. 6, June 17, 1852 (Treas. Off., File T), and Mahan to Thome, July 28, 1856 (Trustees' MSS, Misc. Archives).



ASA MAHAN
(From a photograph in the Oberlin College Library)

Dawes was undoubtedly expressing the former's views when, in 1850, he declared the evangelist "guilty of unchristian conduct" in writing as he did.[46] But it was not until 1855 that Mahan unleashed his wrath upon Finney, his successor as President of Oberlin. Then he undertook a desperate and wholesale campaign of slander and defamation. To Lewis Tappan he declared that, there had "been a sad declension in purity at Oberlin & especially on the part of Mr. Finney." For the good of Oberlin, he insisted, Finney ought to be asked to resign. When John G. Fee, the Kentucky educator and abolitionist, visited Cleveland, Mahan told him a story which greatly shocked Fee and Tappan and others to whom the latter related it. Mr. Finney, said Mahan, in conversing with a beautiful, young lady, remarked to her, "You have the prettiest foot and ancle of any lady in Cleveland!" Of course, the battle of spiritual titans was entertaining to the irreligious, but to the friends of Christianity and Oberlin it was a sad spectacle. Lewis Tappan took it upon himself to castigate Mahan severely, "I fear that the origin of your feelings toward Mr. F[inney], and Oberlin," he wrote to the slanderer, "may be found in two things—wounded pride and excessive self-esteem. The circumstances under which you left O. may have embittered you against the Institution and the members of the Faculty, while your self-esteem (which is extraordinarily developed in you) may have been exceedingly wounded by remarks that have been made . . . respecting you." In another letter he put it even more bluntly: "Your mind has dwelt upon the subject so long, and you are so self-conceited—so sensitive to your reputation—so idolatrous of your influence that you have, I fain believe, done immense injustice to Mr. F. and to yourself." It was a great relief to all concerned when Mr. Mahan and Mr. Finney had an interview and "mutually agreed to 'bridle the tongue.' "[47]

From 1855 to 1857 Mahan served as pastor of the Congregational Church at Jackson, Michigan; in the latter year he came to the Plymouth Church at Adrian. In 1859 Mahan secured the removal of the nearly bankrupt Michigan Union College to Adrian and had it reincorporated as Adrian College. He served as president for a number of years. In 1865 we find him traveling

[46]Morgan to Finney, Aug. 15. 1850 (Finney MSS).
[47]Tappan to Thome, June 13, 21, Oct. 30; Tappan to Mahan, Aug. 12, Sept. 2; Tappan to Finney, Aug. 12, 19, 21, Sept. 15, 1855 (Tappan Letter Books).

about raising money for a Methodist Protestant College in Akron, of which he was to be president. In May he appeared again in the Oberlin pulpit for the first time in fifteen years. During the last years of his life he resided in England where he died on April 4, 1889.[48]

With all his shortcomings Mahan was undoubtedly a man of force. When he was eliminated Oberlin changed. The opposition to the "heathen classics" died down because the leader of the movement was gone. "Sanctification" was soon a matter for apology. From 1850 Oberlin moved away steadily from radicalism toward moderation and from heresy toward orthodoxy.

[48]Albert W. Kauffman, "Early years of Adrian College," *Michigan History Magazine* (Jan., 1929), XIII, 74–90; *Semi-Centennial Souvenir, Adrian College, 1859–1909* (n.d.–n.p.); *Lorain County News* (Oberlin), Mar. 15, 29, May 31, 1865; James H. Fairchild's obituary of Mahan in the *Oberlin Review*, Apr. 30, 1889 (XVI, 216–217).

## CHAPTER XXXI

# *HARD TIMES AND THE ENDOWMENT*

THE funds secured in England by John Keep and William Dawes were all used to pay debts and provide for current needs. No permanent fund was established. "Endowments for the Professorships of the Institution were not solicited," wrote Keep and Dawes in their official report. "*Reliance for the daily food and raiment of the teachers is placed upon the daily bounty of God,* whose providence never fails his children when they do His will and trust in Him. The friends of the Institution have it still in charge to wait upon the Lord to learn what aid they may still be required to afford to it."[1]

There was really no noticeable improvement in the finances of the institution. The professors almost never received their full pay. In 1840 we are told that the "brethren by going ragged (actually) and living upon the most frugal principles, ease off from our Treasury as much as possible." Even in 1841, when Keep and Dawes had just completed their successful quest for money, the Institute owed the faculty between three and four thousand dollars. The salaries of Mahan, Henry Cowles and T. B. Hudson were over a year behind! Shipherd, on one occasion, was unable to get his mail from the post office because he had no money with which to pay postage. In 1843 the professors received from the treasury an average of twenty dollars apiece and during the preceding year only about fifty dollars each. At a meeting of the faculty held late in the former year one member reported that he had not yet been able to pay for the clothes he was wearing though he had had them a year. Another said, "We have not a dollar in our house, nor have we had for months."[2] John Morgan

[1] *Oberlin Evangelist,* Feb. 3, 1841. Italics are mine.

[2] Burnell to Dawes, June 26, 1840 (in frame in O. C. Lib.); Trustees' MSS, 1841; Shipherd to Burnell, Apr. 18, 1841 (Misc. Archives), and Sherlock Bristol in *Oberlin Evangelist,* Jan. 31, 1844.

wrote to Mark Hopkins that he must spend the winter vacation in labor in order to earn money enough to support himself the remainder of the year. In the year 1845–46 Professor George N. Allen received $88.00 from the College, $17.00 from the church and about $40.00 from piano pupils. Professor Dascomb received $210.00 in all in the same year.[3] Professor Finney was the only member of the faculty who received his salary ($600.00) with anything like regularity, the money for that specific purpose being furnished by a philanthropist and friend, Josiah Chapin of Providence, Rhode Island. When Shipherd died in 1844 the Institute owed his estate over $1600.00.[4] Amasa Walker was appointed Professor of Political Economy not only because he was one of the leading American economists and an outstanding reformer, but because he was a man of considerable property and was willing to serve entirely without salary. It was Professor Walker who, in the winter of 1843–44, raised a hundred dollars in Boston and sent it on to Oberlin to be used, as he put it, in *"buying flour & other necessaries for the faculty."*[5]

An attempt was made to balance the budget in 1842. The trustees tried unsuccessfully to persuade the members of the church to contribute a considerable proportion of the salary of Professor *and Pastor* Finney. Outlays for construction and repair were stopped as far as possible. The Prudential Committee even refused to sanction expenditures of about thirty dollars for repairs in Mrs. Mahan's kitchen. The buildings suffered considerably from neglect. Threadbare and emaciated students gathered in the classrooms of dilapidated buildings to hear ragged professors sound the clarion call for world reform. In the same year (1842) the trustees strove to secure further income by charging tuition in the Collegiate Department, as they had not done since 1835.[6] But it was one thing to charge tuition and another to collect it. In 1845 and 1846 students owed the institution over five thousand dollars—and the Treasurer quite frankly classified half their notes as "bad or doubtful." In 1846 Henry Cowles, who made a special investigation of the situation, reported that "the evils of non-

[3]Morgan to Hopkins, May 6, 1845 (Morgan-Hopkins MSS); Allen to Hill, Aug. 21, 1846, and Dascomb to Prudential Committee, Feb. 9, 1846 (Misc. Archives).

[4]W. C. Easell to Mahan, Oct. 21, 1844 (Treas. Off., File M).

[5]Finney to Hill, Nov. 28, 1841 (File C); Walker to Hill, Dec. 16, 1843, and Jan. 15, 1844 (File J), and *Oberlin Evangelist,* Jan. 31, 1844.

[6]T. M., Aug. 22, 24, 1842, and P. C. M., June 30, 1842.

payment of debts here are becoming enormous & seriously threaten the very existence of the Institution."[7]

Agents were kept constantly at work at home and abroad seeking aid. The faculty and trustees themselves contributed. Some was secured among the colonists. In 1844 a "Student's Professorship Association" was formed among the alumni to help support Professor James Fairchild, but the receipts were never large.[8] It was not that graduates and former students were not loyal, but they, too, poor teachers, preachers and missionaries for the most part, were struggling with poverty. Gifts of goods: beef cattle, a "horse beast," grain, land, five brass clocks from Plymouth Hollow, Ct., etc., were more numerous than gifts of money.[9] The cattle and grain could be eaten by teachers and students but other gifts, especially land deeds, were hard to realize on. The Gerrit Smith lands were a liability rather than an asset. Another donation of land was gladly exchanged for a herd of Durham cattle which Father Shipherd helped to drive in to Oberlin from Michigan.[10] Actual cash was hard to find in the depression of the early forties. Usually the best that could be done was to secure loans and collect promises—subscriptions, they were called.

Many of these subscriptions were never paid, for one reason or another. Some had subscribed beyond their ability to pay. Others backed out because of Oberlin heresies. A subscriber from Fitchburg, Massachusetts, wrote to the Secretary in 1845: "I do not feel disposed to pay [my subscription] as I was altogether deceived about the character of the Institution when I made [it]. . . . What little fruits of your peculiar doctrines are seen in this vicinity are not such as we *New Englanders* can in any way fellowship & therefore you will not think it strange that I can not with my present views pay you anything more." And then there was the man who wrote: "I owe only $5.00 and it is not a willing offering. The institution is not such an institution as I supposed it would be when I subscribed. . . . I have had a five dollar note on the Miami Exporting Company which I designed to send you for some time. . . . I know there is some dis-

[7]"Summary of the financial affairs of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute," 1846, and "Report on rates & terms of tuition," 1846 (Misc. Archives).

[8]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Nov. 6, 1844.

[9]James McGibeny to Hill, Nov. 3, 1842 (Treas. Off., File F); *Oberlin Evangelist,* Nov. 10, 1847, etc.

[10]P. C. M., Nov. 3, 1840.

count on the money now. . . . I have felt & now feel that it will answer my conscience to pay that bill and therefore will send it to you for the remainder of the subscription."[11] Undoubtedly many subcriptions were paid in that kind of money! Three years later Miami Exporting Bank notes were worth 65¢ on the dollar. There was a good chance that notes of the Exchange Bank of Cincinnati would be contributed as they were, at one time, worth only 12 cents on the dollar. Bank notes of other institutions were at a discount of 5, 10, 20, 50, and 75 percent![12] Even when an agent did obtain money instead of promises it was necessary to check up to see if it was worth anything!!

By 1845 the institutional debt had reached sixteen thousand dollars, an amount equal to the total budget for two entire years. At the August meeting of the trustees the "Special Committee on Retrenchment" reported: "We feel that Something ought & must be done, & yet we feel, that without the interposition of him to whom belongs the Gold & Silver, & in whose hands are the hearts of men, we are Bankrupt, & the enterprise must be abandoned." Amasa Walker declared that if a vigorous effort was not immediately made to liquidate the debts it would be necessary to "wind up the affairs of the Corporation by a sale of its property for the benefit of its creditors."[13] The non-payment of these obligations not only injured the Institute financially but threatened to alienate valuable friends, many of whom were among its creditors. A thousand dollars was owed to Josiah Chapin of Rhode Island; nearly fifteen hundred of I. M. Dimond's loan was unpaid; over nine hundred dollars was still due Elizur Goodrich for mulberry trees bought in 1836! Just three weeks before the trustees assembled, an additional loan of five hundred dollars had been greedily accepted.[14]

A high-pressure campaign was put on by Oberlin's financial agents, the inveterate Dawes, Sherlock Bristol and Joab Seeley, fortunately all remarkably industrious, persistent and self-sacrificing solicitors. Dawes, himself, gave five hundred; Amasa

[11]J. T. Farwell to Hill, Nov. 15, 1845 (Treas. Off., File M), and Charles Smith, to Hill, Jan. 24, 1842 (File I). Similar in import are John Perkins to Hill, Mar. 29, 1842, and A. C. Potwin to the Trustees, May 16, 1843 (File G).

[12]See bank note table in *Ohio Observer* (Hudson), June 18, 1845.

[13]"Report on Retrenchment—Accepted August 1845," and "A. Walker's Report on finance—adopted August 1845" (Misc. Archives).

[14]"Summary of Financial Affairs of O. C. I. Aug. 1845" (Misc. Archives), and P. C. M., Aug. 1, 1845.

Walker gave five hundred and I. P. Williston of Northampton and Elizur Goodrich contributed similar amounts. Lewis Tappan gave a thousand dollars, likewise Samuel D. Porter, the Rochester Finney convert and member of the Board of Trustees. Philo Penfield Stewart, forgiving Oberlin for its slights "until seventy times seven," contributed two thousand dollars, despite the fact that he had given five hundred just the year before.[15] Members of the faculty also helped by contributing large sums on paper from their unpaid back salaries. President Mahan led off munificently with $500.00. Early in 1846 it was announced that sufficient subscriptions had been received to clear up the debt.[16]

As a precaution against running in debt again, the trusteees decided that teachers disabled by ill-health or absent from exercises on their own business should not be paid, and that unpaid back salaries should not constitute a legal claim upon the corporation. It had been the original idea of Shipherd and Stewart that "self-denying" teachers, who would require no fixed salary but merely enough to support their families, should provide the instruction in the Oberlin Collegiate Institute. Neither of the founders received a regular salary himself. The munificent foundation of 1835 had resulted in the dropping of this conception and the establishment of fixed and comparatively high salaries. In the hard times of the forties, when it was hardly ever certain from day to day whether the institution could continue, there were some, especially Dawes and Sherlock Bristol,[17] who felt that faculty salaries were too high and that, like the founders, they ought to be grateful for whatever the charitable might contribute, giving themselves gladly to the great task of educating teachers and preachers for the "Valley of Dry Bones." Perhaps the faculty had lost some of the missionary zeal which animated the founders; perhaps they had never had it as Shipherd had. Anyway they insisted not only that their salaries be paid when possible but that the institutional indebtedness to them be considered at least on a par with the indebtedness to outsiders. Some

[15]William Dawes to Gerrit Smith, Dec. 5, 1845 (Gerrit Smith MSS); Sherlock Bristol to Hill, Dec. 9, 1844 (Treas. Off., File K), and Joab Seeley to Hill, Dec. 10, 1846 (File O).

[16]Mary C. R. Allen to G. N. Allen, Oct. 22, 1845 (lent by Mary Cochran of Cincinnati), and *Oberlin Evangelist,* Jan. 21, 1846. On payment of debt, see also T. M., Aug. 22, 1846.

[17]T. M., Aug. 27, 29, 1845, and Bristol to Hill, Dec. 9, 1844 (Treas. Off., File K).

teachers refused to make even nominal contributions until the trustees' ruling on this matter was revoked.[18] Lewis Tappan came zealously to their support, denouncing the trustees' policy in repeated letters to Mahan, Dawes, Bristol, Hill and Finney. "And then [as to] the resolution that the Trustees will not be obliged to make up any deficiency in the salaries of the Professors! If I do not mistake this, if persisted in [it] will be a severe blow to the Institute," he wrote to Dawes in March. "No literary or theological institution," he added, "can flourish if the professors are not free from disturbing cares about supporting their families. . . . As a friend of the Institution I beg you, dear brother, to get that resolution repealed."[19] Some members of the faculty, including Finney (Chapin having stopped his gifts), were seriously considering resigning in protest; William Cochran, Professor of Logic, actually did so. When the trustees met again in August, 1846, the faculty submitted an ultimatum demanding that the right of professors or their heirs to sue for the recovery of back salary be recognized, and that if the time should ever come when the Institute's liabilities equalled or exceeded its assets it should "be the duty of the Treasurer or Corresponding Secretary immediately to call a joint meeting of the Faculty & Board of Trust for consultation."[20] The trustees, faced by the united faculty and whipped into line by Tappan, capitulated; the faculty recommendation was adopted, and the stultifying regulation with regard to salaries thus repealed.[21]

Serious efforts were made to make the books balance. The regular Alumni Dinner at the 1846 Commencement seems to have been called off to save money. The faculty members agreed to reductions in their nominal salaries.[22] Nevertheless, in the next fiscal year the current expenses exceeded the ordinary receipts by over two thousand dollars "showing to a certainty that without the prompt application of some preventive the Institu-

[18]Mary C. R. Allen to G. N. Allen, Oct. 22, 1845 (lent by Mary Cochran, Cincinnati).

[19]Tappan to Dawes, Mar. 24, Apr. 30 and July 20, 1846; Tappan to Mahan, Apr. 27, 1846; Tappan to Mahan and Dawes, Apr. 27, 1846; Tappan to Finney, Apr. 27 and May 25, 1846 (Lewis Tappan Letter Books).

[20]Original MS in Misc. Archives.

[21]T. M., Aug. 22, 1846.

[22]W. W. Wright to Hill, Aug., 1846 (Misc. Archives); J. A. Thome to Prudential Committee, Jan., 1847 (Treas. Off., File P), and Keep to Hill and Mahan, Apr. 2, 1846 (File E).

tion will soon become bankrupt."[23] Timothy Hudson hesitated to reenter the faculty for fear that salaries would be further reduced or paid only in part.[24] Though Hudson did come in, other members of the staff resigned or were dropped: W. W. Wright in 1846, George Whipple in 1847; Henry Cowles in 1847, and James A. Thome in 1849. There was an effort in 1846 to secure the resignation of Hamilton Hill in order that he might give way to a cheaper "ready writer." Whipple resigned to accept an attractive offer as secretary of the American Missionary Association, but the discontinuance of service of Wright, Cowles, and Thome was directly related to the effort to balance the budget. In 1849 another special effort to raise funds was made in order to provide absolutely necessary repairs for the buildings.[25]

It was in 1849 that Hamilton Hill went to Paris to the Peace Congress, leaving the keeping of the books to a clerk by the name of Wyett.[26] The casual comments of the latter entered in the Treasurer's Day Book give us an excellent picture of the financial state of the Institute:

*"Oberlin, June 27, 1849*

Treasurer Hill this day delivered up the keys to his 'Pro Tem,' there being 76 cents in the vaults."

*"Thursday, June 28*

Stood at the bar and said 'no money' to sundry destressed applicants till 3 o'clock. . . ."

*"July 7, 1849*

Well, Saturday P. M. has come again and we have to record dull times."

*"Monday morning, July 9*

Got my mouth all made up to take in a little cash this morning. A student . . . called to pay his tuition, but as might be expected he roused out a parcel of old junk in the shape of 'Treas. O.C.I. Pay etc.' "[27]

[23]T. M., Aug. 27, 1847.

[24]Hudson to Hill, Jan. 20, 1848 (Treas. Off., File N); and Hudson to Cowles, Jan. 24, 1848 (Cowles MSS).

[25]T. M., Aug. 23, 1848, and Appeal in *Oberlin Evangelist,* June 6, 1849.

[26]Hill to Trustees, June 25, 1849 (Misc. Archives).

[27]Promissory notes of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute were not very highly regarded. Manual labor, the work of assistant teachers, etc., was usually partly or entirely paid for with these notes. Of course, they came back in payments for board and tuition, though sometimes the Treasurer would accept only a certain percentage in the institution's own paper. It was usually at a discount

"*July 11*

Be it remembered that this day we took in a little cash (5.52) but 'tis used up in advance, we having begged from the building fund to save ourselves from prison."

Among these comments are regular business entries of various sorts: payment for "candles for prayer meeting," credits to students for manual labor performed, a statement of merchandise "exchanged for a watch," a cash payment to Jacob Dolson Cox for services as an assistant teacher, orders for meat on local butchers issued to Professor Fairchild and Dr. Dascomb in lieu of salary overdue. The Pro Tem Treasurer's last comment is dated:

"*October 27, 1849*

And now, farewell! Past all doubt Pro Tem had made his last 'Entry'. . . .

"In taking leave of thee, dirty Blotter, I return thee thanks for the kindly assistance which thy smutty face has rendered in the financial campaign of 4 months which we have fought together. Pity thou couldst not take on a new dress before the esquire resumes his pen, but he has doubtless returned profoundly impressed with sentiments of Peace, & no doubt will permit thee to accompany thy associate *Pro Tem* into honorable retirement.

"May his honor every morning be greeted by a clean floor, a bright fire, & a till full of cash.

"Bowing out at the back door, we repeat, farewell!

*Pro tem*"

But it was to be some time before Hamilton Hill was to have a full till.

Hope was long held out that the Gerrit Smith lands in Virginia would be a source of income of importance. The disposal of half of them to Arthur Tappan as a final payment on the debt to him had been a benefit to Oberlin, it is true, but it had not brought in cash, and cash was what was needed. The remaining ten thousand acres caused the trustees a tremendous amount of trouble and turned out in the end to be a financial mirage. Strenuous efforts were made to sell out at as low as 25 cents an acre. Two sales were actually made. One-quarter payment was made on the

in town, and, of course, was worth nothing outside of the community. There are whole boxes of Institute orders still preserved in the College Archives.

first sale (1851), and then the College was forced to foreclose the mortgage which it held as security. After the sale in 1853 the trustees took the land back when the purchasers pled that they had supposed that the title was clear, but found it much incumbered with rival claims.[28]

It was plain that Oberlin must clear its title or give up hope of getting anything out of it. According to the best legal advice, one claim covering about four thousand of the ten thousand acres, was superior to Oberlin's claim. The College wisely dropped its effort to establish title to that tract and concentrated on the remaining six thousand acres or more. To this latter tract the Gerrit Smith-Oberlin title seems to have been good. Squatters, however, had settled on the best of it, and, when eviction proceedings were started, many technical obstacles appeared. Because of a minor imperfection in the Smith deed all of the heirs of Peter Smith, Gerrit Smith's father, had to sign a quit claim to Oberlin. This was done with considerable trouble. But new technicalities were then produced and thus the litigation dragged on. The squatters had a great advantage in "the deeply rooted prejudice against not only *Oberlin* but the 'Yankees' generally." Oberlin's agents, Virginia lawyers, were half-hearted in their efforts. When the war broke out the matter was still unsettled, but the squatters were in possession.[29] After the war litigation was resumed and eventually the case was fought through nobly —but unsuccessfully—by Theodore Burton. The mineral rights of a very small tract (it is in the oil region) have been retained by the College and small royalties are received on them.

In order to keep the institution going, Oberlin's agents must be constantly a-begging. It was the old story. In the spring of 1850 Professor Morgan described the situation in a letter to Finney: "We are much pressed for funds. We are not in receipt of half of our Salaries." He continued: "We have thought again seriously of the endowment of the Institution as the only thing which can save us from destruction." Even Oberlin's best friends tired eventually of the continual demand for money. "Oberlin, they say, is like the horse leach, crying, give, give, give, and you

[28]P. C. M., Nov. 7, 1851, and Dec. 8, 1853; and T. M., Aug. 22, 1853.

[29]P. C. M., Apr. 24, 1854; W. Underwood to the Trustees, Nov. 30, 1843, Apr. 17, June 13, 1846, and "Reports on Virginia Lands, 1858," and "F. D. Parish, Report, August 1859" (Trustees' MSS. Misc. Archives).

can never satisfy her."[30] If Oberlin could only be endowed and have a regular and dependable income then much of this begging could be eliminated.

There had been serious talk of attempting to secure an endowment at least as early as 1848, the trustees having discussed the possibility of raising $200,000 by the sale of scholarships at their annual meeting in August of that year. A year later they resolved "that the Faculty be requested to make an effort to raise $50,000 by donations."[31] The project was presented to Oberlin's best friends, and the officers of other colleges were asked for advice. Some favored the idea but many opposed. Nevertheless, it seemed to be the only alternative to extinction and so, in the autumn of 1850, the great effort began.[32] The plan was to get as much as possible by donations and the rest by the sale of scholarships at one hundred, fifty, and twenty-five dollars each. The agents would secure negotiable notes, and, when the one-hundred-thousand desired was obtained, the cash would be collected and the scholarships distributed. If this amount was not obtained by January 1, 1853, the whole transaction would be void, thus friends of Oberlin were encouraged to give to the limit in order to save the other subscriptions. Those who bought the hundred-dollar perpetual scholarships were entitled to free tuition for themselves, their children or assigns forever.[33] The fifty-dollar certificates were for eighteen years' tuition, the twenty-five dollar ones for six years'. The hundred thousand was to be invested when obtained, and the income, which it was hoped would be from six to eight thousand dollars, used to pay fifteen to twenty teachers an average of $400.00 a year.[34] Thus Oberlin College (no longer Collegiate Institute) would obtain a permanent financial foundation.

In this financial campaign agents were able to appeal to the self-interest of prospective subscribers, pointing out to them that an investment in one of these scholarships would be very profitable for their children, laying "up in the way for them the means

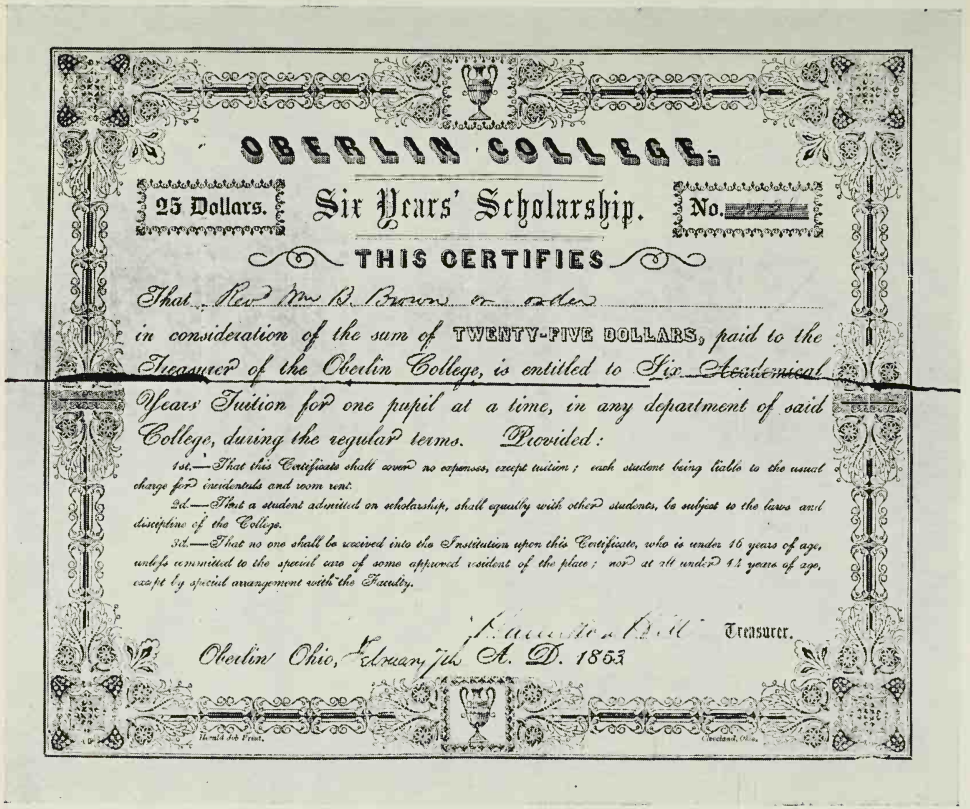
[30]Morgan to Finney, May 7, 1850 (Finney MSS), and R. Hathaway to Hill, July 10, 1850 (Treas. Off., File N).

[31]T. M., Aug. 21, 1849.

[32]P. C. M., June 28, 1850.

[33]A few of the scholarship certificates are still outstanding. I believe it is the College's policy to allow the interest on a hundred dollars against present tuition charges.

[34]*Oberlin Evangelist,* Dec. 3, 1851.



OBERLIN COLLEGE.

25 Dollars. Six Years' Scholarship. No.

THIS CERTIFIES

That Rev. Wm B. Brown or order

in consideration of the sum of TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS, paid to the Treasurer of the Oberlin College, is entitled to Six Academical Years' Tuition for one pupil at a time, in any department of said College, during the regular terms. Provided:

1st.—That this Certificate shall cover no expenses, except tuition; each student being liable to the usual charge for incidentals and room rent.

2d.—That a student admitted on scholarship, shall equally with other students, be subject to the laws and discipline of the College.

3d.—That no one shall be received into the Institution upon this Certificate, who is under 16 years of age, unless committed to the special care of some approved resident of the place; nor at all under 14 years of age, except by special arrangement with the Faculty.

Treasurer.

Oberlin Ohio, February 7th A. D. 1853

Herald Job Print. Cleveland, Ohio.

A TWENTY-FIVE-DOLLAR SCHOLARSHIP
(From an original in the Treasurer's Office)

of securing that education which fire cannot consume, nor the vicissitudes of commerce snatch from their hands." At the same time the benevolence of clients was appealed to and Oberlin's record exhibited. Oberlin claimed the aid of the philanthropic because of its provisions for student self-support and physical training in the manual labor system, because of the unique success of "joint education," because of the great number of schoolteachers trained there for the education of the West, and above all, because of the Institution's work in the field of reform and in the promotion of *"a liberal yet aggressive and Evangelical piety."*[35]

The colonists and teachers in Oberlin started the campaign off with a contribution totalling twenty thousand dollars. Professor Timothy B. Hudson and Father Keep went East together by way of Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. Pittsburgh produced nothing. Philadelphia, where the Quakers objected to contributing to a sectarian college, gave only a little over two thousand dollars. Receipts in New York were small also, though Lewis Tappan promised one thousand dollars and Horace Greeley gave a hundred. In Boston they found that Mahan and Dawes had been hard at work for some time soliciting money for Cleveland University from Oberlin's former patrons and conducting an "insidious" campaign to undermine "confidence in Oberlin." On his way back to Ohio Hudson stopped at Peterboro and interviewed Gerrit Smith, who received him with his usual graciousness, stated his financial inability to contribute in a large way, but on Hudson's departure pressed two hundred dollars into his hand. Hudson's and Keep's mission cannot be considered a success, netting, as it did, only ten thousand dollars, some of it in land and cancelled notes.[36]

But other agents were busy nearer at home where, for obvious reasons, the scholarships were more in demand. Among these agents were Charles H. Penfield (step-son of Henry Cowles), Henry E. Whipple, Wallcott B. Williams, Miner Fairfield and the brilliant young Professor James Monroe. Monroe was outstandingly successful, securing over two thousand dollars in

[35]*Ibid.*, and Keep to Gerrit Smith, Oct. 2, 1851 (Gerrit Smith MSS).

[36]Hudson to Hill, Nov. 23, 1850; Hudson to Monroe, Dec. 20, 1850; Hudson to Hill, Jan. 6, 8, 11 and June 17, 1851 (Treas. Off., File N); Hudson to Cowles, Dec. 17, 1850 (Cowles-Little MSS); Keep to Finney, Dec. 28, 1850 (Finney MSS), and Keep and Hudson to Hill, Dec. 21, 1850 (Treas. Off., File N).

Pittsfield alone!! By Commencement, 1851, 1450 scholarships had been sold and $80,000 of the $100,000 derived had been subscribed. In the early autumn the campaign dragged, but, late in January, 1852, it was announced that the hundred thousand mark had been reached.[37] Oberlin had an endowment!

Theological education in the West seems to have decidedly declined in popularity in the fifties. The Theological Department died out in Western Reserve College. The classes at Lane Theological Seminary were less than half as large in the fifties as in the forties.[38] The seminary at Oberlin seemed to be on the wane too, only twenty students being enrolled in 1852. In order to save the Theological Department, therefore, a department which seemed to the trustees and faculty the very marrow of the institution, it was determined, as soon as the general endowment had been completed, to attempt a special fifty thousand dollar endowment for the teaching of Theology.[39] In this effort wealthy patrons were depended upon for large donations, it being highly impractical to attempt the sale of special scholarships as long as tuition was free anyway in that department. The sum desired was not secured, but Willard Sears of Boston, Lewis Tappan and others saw to it that the seminary was kept going.[40] A renewed attempt to complete the endowment was made in the late fifties with Henry Cowles as agent. But another period of hard times had set in, and again it failed, though some twenty thousand dollars in cash, notes and other credits was secured, enough to pay the professors of Theology (J. H. Fairchild had become Associate Professor of Systematic Theology in 1859) and maintain the department for a few years longer.[41]

But nothing is ever really finished. As soon as the $100,000.00

[37]Hill to G. Whipple, Dec. 25, 1850; Keep and Hudson to Hill, Dec. 21, 1850 (Treas. Off., File N). Monroe says that he raised about one-third of the whole endowment (MS Autobiography in Monroe MSS). Also T. M., Aug. 27, 1851; Elizabeth Maxwell Monroe to parents, Jan. 27, 1852 (lent by Mrs. Emma Monroe Fitch), and P. C. M., Jan. 19, 1852.

[38]Lane Theological Seminary, *General Catalogue, 1828–1881* (Cincinnati—1881).

[39]T. M., Aug. 23, 1852.

[40]Sears to Finney, Dec. 21, 1852 (Finney MSS), and Tappan to Hill, Jan. 1, 1853 (Treas. Off., File P).

[41]P. C. M., Dec. 11, 1856; T. M., Aug. 20, 1858; Finney "To the friends of our Lord Jesus Christ," Sept. 13, 1858 (Misc. Archives); H. Cowles to Finney, Sept. 9, 1859 (Finney MSS); Henry Cowles, "Report of Agency for Oberlin College . . . 1859" (Cowles MSS). Part of this fund was used to begin the endowment of the Finney Professorship of Systematic Theology.

subscription had been completed the agents were sent back over their tracks to collect. Sometimes, as usual, goods had to be accepted in lieu of cash; twenty-five Webster's *Dictionaries* (which the College seemed to have no use for and immediately sold at 25% discount), a harness turned in for a $50.00 scholarship, a hundred-dollars' worth of stock in the Rock Creek and Trumbull Plank Road Co., and a fraudulent mortgage from H. C. Taylor.[42] As the funds had to be reinvested anyway, the College was glad to take a mortgage on the good property of subscribers and then merely collect interest on the amount subscribed. The collection of these small amounts of interest and the supervision of the many mortgages, including those made as security for new loans, was a complicated and laborious task. A good many subscribers did not pay at all, and there was often difficulty in collecting interest, so that a large number of petty legal suits had to be instigated in the next few years.[43] On the part of those who had overestimated their future wealth when making subscriptions there were many requests for release. If such release was granted it was usually on the condition of the payment of interest. The fund collected or secured reached $70,000 in August, 1853, and $90,000 in 1860,[44] a fairly good percentage when we consider the hard times and loose business practices of the times. In the late fifties and sixties the general budget came very close to balancing from year to year!! This was an achievement.

It should not be supposed that the faculty were immediately transported to a bed of roses. On the contrary, their teaching burden was enormously increased and their salaries grew steadily less adequate as general prices advanced. From 571 in 1851 the total number of students leaped to 1020 in 1852, and to 1305 in 1853! Besides, the new accessions seemed to be on the whole less mature, and had "less fixedness and rigidity of character," thus requiring closer attention on the part of the teaching and administrative staff.[45] To keep down the number of students, agents solicited the donation of scholarships as well as

[42]P. C. M., Oct. 20, 1851; Mar. 22, 1852; Apr. 12, 1864, and William C. St. John to Henry Cowles, Nov. 4, 1853 (Cowles-Little MSS).

[43]T. M., Aug. 24, 1853, and Aug. 27, 1856; P. C. M., Oct. 3, 1853, and June 5, 1856.

[44]"Statistics in connection with the Endowment Fund, August, 1853" and "Endowment fund report, 1859–60" (Trustees' MSS, 1860, Misc. Archives).

[45]"Report on Oberlin" in the *Oberlin Evangelist,* Aug. 15, 1855.

cash and thus began the retirement of the certificates. It was unfortunate that the endowment should have been secured just before the general price level, and therefore the cost of living, began to go up rapidly. As early as 1855 an effort was made to raise money for salaries, but not for ten years was any considerable advance made.[46]

The significance of the establishment of the endowment is not that it in any way added to the luxuries or even comforts of the faculty but that it assured Oberlin College of permanence.

[46] *Ibid.*, Aug. 15 and Sept. 12, 1855, and Cowles' Report for 1859 and 1860 cited above.

## A BALLAD OF OBERLIN*

there is a Place that growes in grace
a Plase of great repute
the Plase i mene is Christian beene
the oberlin institute

the Eastern fees blow down the trees
& turns out Evry best
& Pedlars ther i do declare
are turning into Pristes

the Studians all from Evry Call
& likewise Evry quarter
to Clear thair head Eat Nought but bred
with a Little Salt & watter

freedom thay Cry the time is Nigh
that Negroes must be free
the autintot must leave his Cot
and vile barberity

the Place growes well & who Can tel
what providence may Deeme
thay bilt a SCoole to teach a foole
& made it go by Steame

all you that want a berth
to Live quite free from Sin
you must go to ohio
& Live in . . . oberlin.

*Literally transcribed from a contemporary manuscript in the Oberlin College Library .

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AFLETCHER HISTORY

*AFLETCHER HISTORY *

TOF OBERLIN COLLEGE

*TOF OBERLIN COLLEGE *

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